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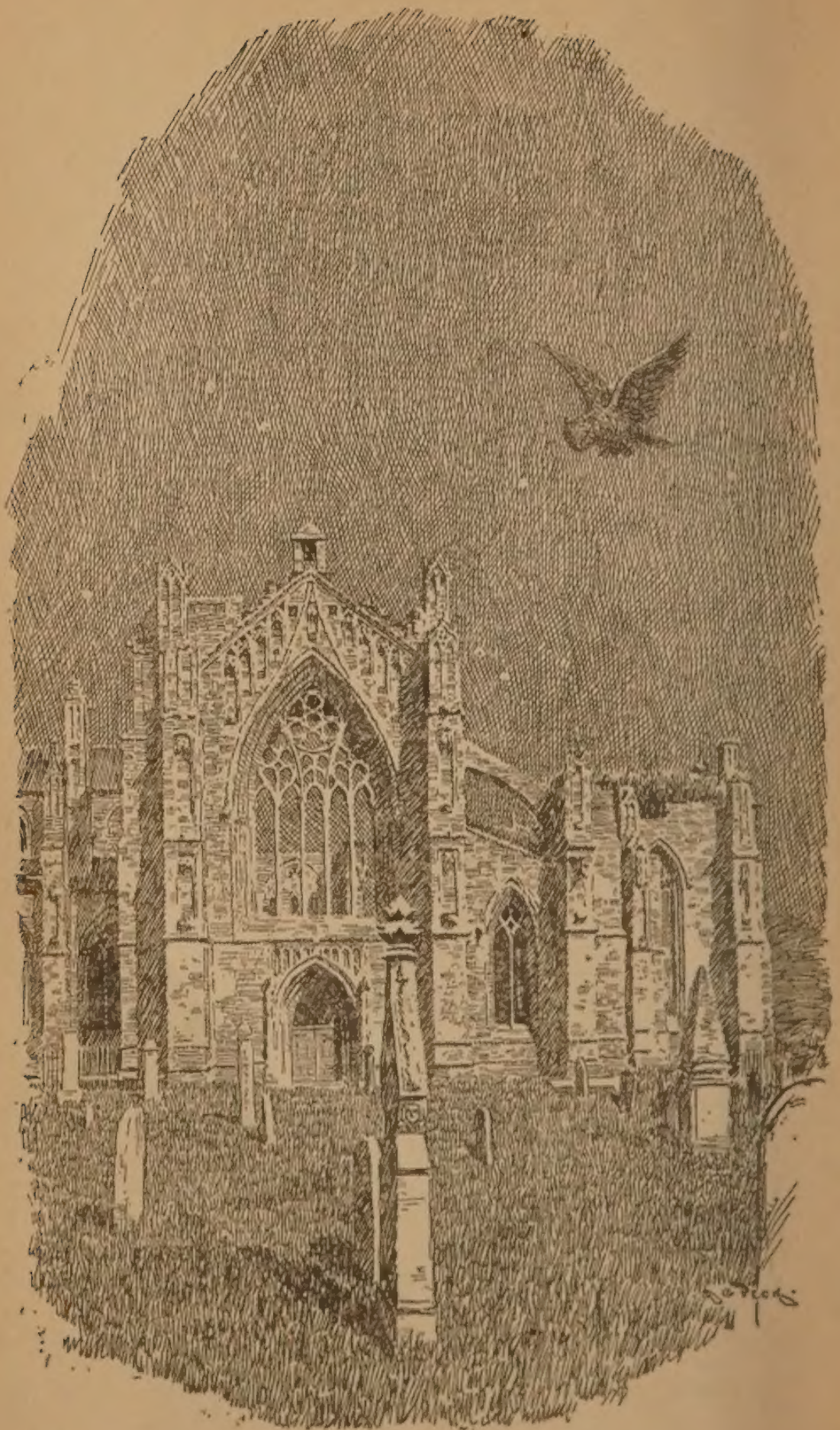

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

Sir Walter Scott, Bart.

Edited by Ralph Hartt Bowles
Revised by H. Y. Moffett
Illustrated by A. Gladys Peck

The Macmillan Company

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PREFATORY NOTE

It would be difficult to find more wholesome poetry for boys and girls than that of Sir Walter Scott. There are a contagious purity and a manliness of tone about it that fit it especially for young readers. Scott never perplexes one with subtle problems but is always cheerfully objective. He is fond of outdoor things and of vigorous men and women. If he never touches us very deeply, neither does he depress us by pessimistic views of life. He is like a sturdy, sane, yet sprightly friend, who, if he ever has doubts and discouragements, never troubles us about them, and who stimulates us always to sound, hopeful thought and manly, upright action.

Young people cannot have too many friends of this kind, nor can they have too much of such a friend. If this little book is the means of extending among boys and girls a knowledge of Scott, or of opening to them a new field of enjoyment, I shall feel that my labors have been more than repaid.

The text here given is based largely upon that of the Globe edition, with some modernization of the pointing and occasional modifications according to other well-prepared texts.

R. H. B.

INTRODUCTION

The Life of Scott

Scott modestly says of himself that his "birth was neither distinguished nor sordid," and then adds that it was gentle, because of remote connections with ancient families, both on his father's and his mother's side. These connections were so numerous and distinguished that, as Lockhart says in his *Life*, "There are few in Scotland under the titled nobility who could trace their blood to so many stocks of historical distinction." On his father's side he was descended from Wat of Harden, a stern old Border chief, of whom he says in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel":

> Marauding chief! his sole delight
> The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
> Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
> In youth might tame his rage for arms;
> And still, in age, he spurned at rest,
> And still his brows the helmet pressed,
> Albeit the blanched locks below
> Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow.[1]

[1] Canto IV

On his mother's side he was related to the Rutherfords and the Swintons, well-known families of the Border. It is singularly appropriate that the mantle of imaginative genius should have fallen on a man of Scott's inheritance,—a genius which enabled him, in vivid poetry and romantic prose, to preserve forever pictures of a Scotch life that has long since passed away.

Scott's immediate parentage was unromantic enough. His father, Walter Scott, was a Writer to the Signet, or, in modern phrase, an attorney, with a lucrative practice. He seems to have been kind, industrious, and frugal, somewhat narrow in religious matters, perhaps, but highly respected and successful in his profession. He had little taste for imaginative literature, and would have been horrified at the thought of his son's becoming a poet and a novelist. Scott's mother was a Miss Rutherford, the daughter of a professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

Walter Scott, poet, novelist, and historian, was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. He was the third of six children who lived to maturity. When he was a year and a half old, he had a fever which left him lame in the right leg. Many attempts were made to restore the complete use of the limb, but they were all unsuccessful; and at length the boy was sent into the country to live with his grandfather at

Sandy-Knowe, in the hope that the out-of-door life would effect a cure. Here he soon became a great favorite, especially with his grandfather's chief shepherd, who would carry the boy up on the hills with him when he went to watch the sheep. There he would sometimes remain all day long, with the sheep about him. On one occasion he is said to have been forgotten and left there until a thunderstorm came on. His frightened aunt, who, suddenly remembering him, ran up on the crags after the boy and found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at every flash of lightning, and crying out, "Bonny! bonny!"

Except for a year spent at Bath, in the hope that the change would be beneficial to his health, and occasional visits to Edinburgh, the boy remained at his grandfather's until his eighth year. From the testimony of a lady who met him in the winter of 1777, when he was little more than six years old, we must conclude that he was unusually interesting and precocious. She says in a letter to a friend: "I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands, 'There's the mast gone,' says he; 'crash

it goes!—they will all perish.' After his agitation, he turns to me, 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.' I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully." [1]

On returning home to live, the young Walter attended successively various schools; but he seems to have been only a fair scholar, and speaks of himself as "glancing like a meteor from the bottom to the top of the form." In spite of his lameness he was a lively little fellow, took part in many fist fights, and was a nimble climber. He read voraciously out of school hours, and became remarkably versed in literature for a boy of his age. He tells us in his autobiographical fragment how he found by chance some odd volumes of Shakespeare in his mother's dressing room, and with what delight he sat up surreptitiously reading them by the light of the fire. Through a tutor employed in the family at this time, he was introduced to Ossian and to Spenser, and a little later, while visiting his aunt at Kelso, made the acquaintance of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. Of these books he writes: "I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, I

intended for an old-fashioned arbor in the garden. . . . The summer day sped onward so fast that, notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was, in this instance, the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes, nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm." [1]

During his stay at Kelso he attended the public school in order to keep fresh in his studies. Here he met James and John Ballantyne, who were afterward associated with him in the printing business. James Ballantyne tells us that: "He was then, as he continued during all his after life to be, devoted to antiquarian lore, and was certainly the best story-teller I had ever heard, either then or since. He soon discovered that I was as fond of listening as he himself was of relating; and I remember it was a thing of daily occurrence, that, after he had made himself master of his own les-

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, I

son, I, alas! being still sadly to seek in mine, he used to whisper to me, 'Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story.' . . . In the intervals of school hours it was our constant practice to walk together by the banks of the Tweed, our employment continuing exactly the same, for his stories seemed to be quite inexhaustible." [1]

In November, 1783, Scott entered the University of Edinburgh. Here he seems not to have distinguished himself in his studies, but to have spent his spare time in rambling about the country and in miscellaneous reading. On holidays and vacations he would climb Salisbury Crags or some other such picturesque place, and spend the day reading with a friend or telling stories, sometimes tales which he had read, sometimes romances of his own invention. Thus early he seems to have acquired the fluency of expression which he afterwards developed to such a high degree. At this time he began to collect old ballads and other legendary lore. He also took lessons in painting, but seems to have accomplished little. From reading Tasso in translation he became interested in Italian, and soon acquired a good reading knowledge of the language.

In 1786 Scott left the University without taking a degree, and apprenticed himself to

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, I

his father. The elder Scott wished his son to become an advocate; and, though the boy had no inclination toward the profession, he yielded to his father's wishes. For the next five or six years he spent a good part of every day in his father's office, copying documents for threepence a page, and acquiring a thorough knowledge of the details of Scotch law. It was drudgery, but doubtless valuable discipline for a young man whose intellectual habits were rather careless.

In the first year of his apprenticeship he met Burns; and though he was too young to do more than look at and listen to the great man, he won his thanks by naming the author of some verses written beneath a picture which greatly touched the poet. The same year he made his first visit to the Highlands. Alternately drudging in his father's office, making long excursions into the country, attending law lectures at the University, or debating in the Literary Society, Scott spent the years of his apprenticeship, and in 1792 was admitted to the bar.

Like most young lawyers, he found it hard to get under way. His father was able to turn some employment in his direction, however, so that from the first he was assured of a small practice; but the future poet and novelist continued to be better known as a pleasant com-

panion and a capital story-teller than as a promising attorney. His interest in German literature, which had been roused a few years before, led him to try his hand at translation; and in 1796 he published anonymously versions of Burger's "Leonore" and "The Wild Huntsman." These attracted very little attention, however, beyond the circle of Scott's immediate friends. Nevertheless he continued to study German literature, and to translate German ballads and dramas. The following summer, during one of his vacation jaunts, he met Miss Charlotte Margaret Charpentier, a vivacious and graceful young Frenchwoman, who had come to England at the beginning of the Revolution. Scott immediately became interested in her, and though a love affair of several years' duration had terminated unhappily only the year before, he soon became engaged to Miss Charpentier. His strait-laced parents seem at first to have regarded the young lady with distrust, apparently for no other reason than that she was French; but they at length softened, and the young people were married in December of the same year, 1797. The following summer they took a pretty cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh, where for the next four years they lived a simple rustic life. Here Scott spent much of his available leisure in collecting antiquarian

lore, in reading, translating, and writing. Early in 1799 he published a translation of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*, but like his earlier translations it attracted little notice. A little later he wrote some ballads in imitation of the ancient style. All this early work brought him little money and little reputation; but it served to steady his hand for the more important work that he was to do later. Meanwhile, in 1799, he was appointed sheriff of Selkirk. This position, which yielded a salary of £300, was especially welcome to him at this time, for it relieved him from money anxiety at a time when his professional income was small and his family expenses were increasing. It made him feel freer, also, to devote his leisure to the literary pursuits which he really loved. The interest in ballad literature which he had shown ever since boyhood expressed itself, in 1802, in the publication of the first two volumes of the *Border Minstrelsy*, followed a year later by a third volume. Scott had taken great pains to collect the materials for this work, and in his rambles about the country had often gone miles simply to hear some new or rare ballad recited, and to note it down for future use. As the result of all this patient labor the *Border Minstrelsy* was the best collection of old English ballad literature yet made; and though the work did not appeal to the general reader, it at once gave

Scott considerable reputation among scholars and men of letters. His acquaintance now rapidly widened, and his humble little cottage at Lasswade was visited by the most eminent people.

In the summer of 1804 Scott moved to Ashestiel, a modest but beautifully situated house on the banks of the Tweed. The period of his residence here, which extended over eight years, was noteworthy for the production of most of his poetry. In this new home in the country, where he was free to indulge to the full his taste for outdoor sports, Scott worked away busily at his literary tasks. Of his manner of living at this time Lockhart says that: "He had now adopted the habits in which, with very slender variation, he after persevered when in the country. He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation, for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcombries of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those 'bed-gown and slipper tricks,' as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Arrayed in his shooting jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate or-

der, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favorite dog lay watching his eye just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus by the time the family assembled for breakfast, between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) *'To break the neck of the day's work.'* After the breakfast a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, 'his own man.' When the weather was bad, he would labor incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o'clock at the latest. . . ." [1]

Early in January, 1805, the first of his great narrative poems was published; this was "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." It met with immediate success, ran rapidly through several editions, and brought the author nearly £800, at that time a remarkable return for a single work. The success of the "Lay" led Scott to abandon the law and to make literature his profession. He now plunged with the greatest ardor into various sorts of literary work. He began to prepare an edition of Dryden, and varied the monotony of his labors at this by turning off occasional magazine articles. At this time he also began *Waverley*, but after writing

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, II

a few chapters threw it aside, owing to the unfavorable criticism of a friend.

In 1806 an arrangement was made by which Scott was appointed clerk of the Court of Session, while the former incumbent, who was old and in feeble health, was to receive the salary until his death. This office added considerably to the weight of Scott's duties, requiring his attendance at the court for from four to six hours a day during about six months of the year; but the salary of £800 promised in the near future to increase his income to the point where he would feel independent. Speaking of the affair he himself said: "I determined that literature should be my staff, but not my crutch; and that the profits of my literary labor, however convenient otherwise, should not, if I could help it, become necessary to my ordinary expenses. Upon such a post an author might hope to retreat, without any perceptible alteration of circumstances, whenever the time should arrive that the public grew weary of his endeavors to please, or he himself should tire of the pen." [1] In the autumn of the same year he began "Marmion," and soon after it was begun, sold it for £1000, before the publisher had seen a line of the poem. The confidence of the publisher in Scott's ability to write a second poem as popular as the "Lay

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, II

of the Last Minstrel" seems to have been absolute. "Marmion" appeared early in 1808, passed rapidly through successive editions, and ultimately proved more popular than its predecessor. Though lacking the lightness and graceful simplicity of the former, it is a better developed poem. The characterization is more carefully elaborated, the descriptions are richer, and it contains more striking scenes. The same year the edition of Dryden which Scott had been working on steadily for the past three years appeared in eighteen volumes. It met with a favorable reception from the critics, and had as good a sale as could be expected from such a work.

This was hardly off his hands when he arranged to edit a similar edition of Swift. The amount of labor that he could turn off at this time is astonishing. When one considers the demands of his official duties as sheriff and clerk of the Court of Session, one wonders how he could have found time for the tremendous amount of research required by the editions of Dryden and Swift, and at the same time kept his mind sufficiently elastic to compose poetry. He himself said of his labors at this period: "Ay, it was enough to tear me to pieces, but there was a wonderful exhilaration about it all; my blood was kept at fever-pitch. I felt as if I could have grappled with anything and

everything; then, there was hardly one of all my schemes that did not afford me the means of serving some poor devil of a brother author. There were always huge piles of materials to be arranged, sifted, and indexed—volumes of extracts to be transcribed—journeys to be made hither and thither, for ascertaining little facts and dates,—in short, I could commonly keep half a dozen of the ragged regiment of Parnassus in tolerable ease." [1]

In the midst of such labors as these Scott was able to compose "The Lady of the Lake," which appeared in May, 1810. For this poem he received £2000, in those days an unprecedented sum. Of its reception a contemporary says: "I do not recollect that any of all the author's works was ever looked for with more intense anxiety, or that any one of them excited a more extraordinary sensation when it did appear. The whole country rang with the praises of the poet—crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighborhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors." [1] Scott himself said of the success of the poem: "It was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, II

a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune."[1] "The Lady of the Lake" has proved to be the most popular of Scott's narrative poems. It has greater variety and is more fully developed than "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," and is less obscure and has a more pleasing plot than "Marmion." Its descriptions of natural scenery, and the grace of some of the more purely lyric passages are unsurpassed. The following year he published "The Vision of Don Roderick," written as a contribution to the Portuguese who had suffered from the ravages of the Peninsular War. Though successful in bringing in several hundred pounds to the fund, the poem added nothing to Scott's reputation.

Scott had for many years cherished the idea of one day owning a large estate and a house, where he could live with dignity and entertain handsomely; and now that the financial returns from his poetry were so large, he began to see the possibility of realizing his hopes. Accordingly, in 1811, he made the first step toward building up such an estate, by the purchase of a good-sized farm lying along the Tweed, about halfway between Melrose and Selkirk, and a few miles below Ashestiel. He immediately set about repairing and enlarging the house, planting trees, and draining the

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, II

land; and for the next ten years spent much of his time and all his spare money in developing his property. From time to time he purchased additional land, and in 1817 he laid the foundations of the present splendid mansion. The building up of this magnificent estate severely tasked Scott's financial resources; and in order to raise the necessary money he wrote with increasing rapidity. Nevertheless, the period extending from 1812, when he moved to Abbotsford, to 1826, when he became a bankrupt, was probably the happiest and certainly the most splendid part of his life. All the while he saw his dreams of proprietary ownership being realized on a large scale; all the while he was turning off his literary works with the greatest ease and in the greatest profusion; and at the same time he was entertaining his friends and the most distinguished visitors with princely hospitality. Washington Irving gives us an interesting account of a visit he made at Abbotsford in the summer of 1817. He says of his reception:

"The noise of my chaise had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. This alarm brought out the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous. In a little while, the lord of the

castle himself made his appearance. I knew him at once, by the likenesses that had been published of him. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking-staff, but moving rapidly and with vigor. By his side jogged along a large iron-gray stag-hound, of most grave demeanor, who took no part in the clamor of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception.

"Before Scott reached the gate, he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford. . . . Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand: 'Come, drive down, drive down to the house,' said he; 'ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterward ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.'

"I would have excused myself on the plea of having already made my breakfast. 'Hut, man,' cried he, 'a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast.'

"I was accordingly whirled to the portal of the cottage, and in a few moments found myself seated at the breakfast table. There was no one present but the family, which consisted of Mrs. Scott; her eldest daughter Sophia, then a fine girl about seventeen; Miss Ann Scott, two or three years younger; Walter, a well-

grown stripling; and Charles, a lively boy, eleven or twelve years of age.

"I soon felt myself quite at home, and my heart in a glow, with the cordial welcome I experienced. I had thought to make a mere morning visit, but found I was not to be let off so lightly. 'You must not think our neighborhood is to be read in a morning, like a newspaper,' said Scott; 'it takes several days of study for an observant traveller, that has a relish for auld-world trumpery. After breakfast you shall make your visit to Melrose Abbey; I shall not be able to accompany you, as I have some household affairs to attend to; but I will put you in charge of my son Charles, who is very learned in all things touching the old ruin and the neighborhood it stands in. . . . When you come back, I'll take you out on a ramble about the neighborhood. To-morrow we will take a look at the Yarrow, and the next day we will drive over to Dryburgh Abbey, which is a fine old ruin, well worth your seeing.' In a word, before Scott had got through with his plan, I found myself committed for a visit of several days, and it seemed as if a little realm of romance was suddenly open before me." [1]

Meanwhile, in the midst of the oversight of his improvements and the exercise of hospi-

[1] Washington Irving's *Abbotsford*

tality, he continued his official labors and his literary work. At the beginning of 1813 "Rokeby" appeared. Though looked for eagerly, and enjoying a considerable immediate sale, it was less favorably received than its predecessors, and never became really popular. The same year he was honored by an offer of the laureateship, and though he declined the position because of the duties attached to it, he felt gratified by the offer. Meanwhile, he had taken up the manuscript of *Waverley*, which he had begun in 1805, and, encouraged by the favorable criticism of a friend, completed and published it anonymously in the summer of 1814. The appearance of this work marks an epoch in Scott's literary history. Hitherto he had been known chiefly as a poet; for the future he was to be known mainly as a novelist. The work appeared anonymously, indeed, and the succeeding novels were announced to be "by the author of *Waverley*"; but though Scott did not publicly acknowledge the authorship until 1827, the secret was soon guessed by those who knew him. The success of *Waverley* was not at once remarkable, but it was sufficient to show the author that he had struck a promising vein. He wrote one more long narrative poem, "The Lord of the Isles," which appeared early in 1815. James Ballantyne describes a visit he paid Scott some days after this poem appeared:

" 'Well, James,' he said, 'I have given you a week—what are people saying about "The Lord of the Isles?" ' I hesitated a little, after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point. 'Come,' he said, 'speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head to be on so much ceremony *with me* all of a sudden? But I see how it is, the result is given in one word—*Disappointment*.' My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth, he had been wholly unprepared for the event; for it is a singular fact that before the public, or rather the booksellers, had given their decision, he no more knew whether he had written well or ill, than whether a die thrown out of a box was to turn up a size or an ace. However, he instantly resumed his spirits, and expressed his wonder rather that his poetical popularity should have continued so long, than that it should have now at last given way. At length he said, with perfect cheerfulness: 'Well, well, James, so be it —but you know we must not droop, for we cannot afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else,' —and so he dismissed me and resumed his novel." [1]

The remark of Scott just quoted, "Since one

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, III

line has failed, we must just stick to something else," is significant. Doubtless he felt that the failure of "The Lord of the Isles" meant that he must look to fiction for his future success; and the favorable reception of *Waverley* made him very hopeful. The falling off in his own popularity he felt was due somewhat to the growing fame of Byron, and he said at this time, "Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow." Scott had hardly finished "The Lord of the Isles" when he began *Guy Mannering*, which he wrote with such rapidity that, as he himself said, it "was the work of six weeks at a Christmas."

In the summer of 1815 Scott's imagination was so excited by the battle of Waterloo and the fall and exile of Napoleon, that he went over to the Continent, visited the battle-field, and was in Paris during its occupation by the allies. Here he was presented to Alexander, Czar of Russia, the Duke of Wellington, Marshal Blücher, and many other eminent soldiers and statesmen. He was present at all the principal parties, balls, dinners, and other festivities of the time, and was everywhere honored with the attentions of the most distinguished persons. He recorded his impressions of his journey in a series of letters to his home circle, which were afterward published under the title of *Paul's Letters to His Kinsfolk*. About

the same time the poem of *The Field of Waterloo* was published and met with a large sale.

The year 1816 was one of the busiest of Scott's life. In January appeared *Paul's Letters*, followed in rapid succession by *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, and *Harold the Dauntless*, a drama in verse. The novels were now eagerly looked for and voraciously read. The impression they made is described in a letter from the London publisher, Murray, soon after the appearance of *Old Mortality*. "Lord Holland said, when I asked him his opinion, 'Opinion! We did not one of us go to bed last night—nothing slept but my gout.'" [1] Early in 1818 *Rob Roy* appeared, followed a little later by *The Heart of Midlothian*. Of this point in Scott's career Lockhart says: "At this moment, his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone. His works were the daily food, not only of his countrymen, but of all educated Europe. His society was courted by whatever England could show of eminence. . . . The annual profits of his novels alone had, for several years, been not less than £10,000; his domains were daily increased—his castle was rising—and perhaps few doubted that ere long he might receive from the just favor of his

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, IV

Prince some distinction in the way of external rank, such as had seldom before been dreamed of as the possible recompense of mere literary celebrity." [1]

In 1819 *The Bride of Lammermoor, The Legend of Montrose*, and *Ivanhoe* appeared. The first and the last of these novels were dictated by Scott while he was suffering the keenest agony. So ill was he, indeed, when he wrote *The Bride of Lammermoor*, that, on the appearance of the novel, he could not recollect a single incident, character, or conversation that it contained. In the following year he was made a baronet, and was offered the honorary degree of D.C.L. by Oxford and Cambridge universities. The same year he published *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*. These were followed, in 1821, by *Kenilworth* and *The Pirate*; in 1822, by *The Fortunes of Nigel* and the dramatic sketch of *Halidon Hill*; in 1823, by *Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward*, and *St. Ronan's Well*; in 1824, by *Redgauntlet*; and in 1825, by *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*. In the last-named year he also began the *Life of Napoleon*.

The year 1825 was the last of Scott's prosperity. He had produced his best work, both in poetry and in fiction; he had reached the zenith of his literary popularity and his material pros-

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, IV

perity; his name was known and loved all over the civilized world; and Abbotsford, now completed, was the Mecca of thousands of tourists. Early in 1826, when he had just reached the place where he might feel that he could afford to pause in his labors and enjoy a happy and dignified leisure, his publisher, Constable, failed, involving the printing firm of James Ballantyne & Co., of which Scott had been a member since 1809, to the extent of £117,000. The blow was a terrible one to Scott's pride, but he met it in the bravest way. He refused to avail himself of the bankrupt laws, by which he might have turned over to his creditors his available property, and then gone on, unencumbered, to regain by his writing what fortune he could; and he likewise declined all offers of assistance from friends. But declaring that he would pay every penny by his own efforts, he at once set to work. The next five years are the history of a heroic struggle against time, to pay off his debts by his literary labors. There is nothing in the history of letters like the spectacle of this man, fifty-four years old, setting himself to work to pay off financial obligations for which he himself was responsible only in a technical sense. He had hardly recovered from the blow of the failure, however, when Lady Scott died, and he was left to labor on alone. At this time he writes in his

diary: ". . . I scarce know how I feel, sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Ann; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsel, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone."[1]

Meanwhile *Woodstock*, which had been sold to London publishers for the enormous sum of £8000, appeared and met with tremendous success. The price it brought renewed Scott's confidence in his ability to pay all his debts, and made him continue his work with fresh energy. In 1827 the *Life of Napoleon* appeared in nine volumes. This alone brought Scott's creditors £18,000. The same year appeared the first series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*, which included *The Highland Widow*, *The Two Drovers*, and *The Surgeon's Daughter*, and also the first series of *Tales of a Grandfather*. In 1828 *The Fair Maid of Perth* and the second series of *Tales of a Grandfather* were published, followed in 1829 by *Anne of Geierstein*

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, VII

and a third series of *Tales of a Grandfather*. Early in 1830 the strain of so much hard labor brought on a slight attack of apoplexy. In spite of this warning, however, he persisted in his labors, and the same year wrote and published *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, a fourth series of *Tales of a Grandfather*, and the first volume of a *History of Scotland*. In November he had a second attack of apoplexy, and early in 1831 another, which resulted in partial paralysis. Nevertheless, in spite of the protests of his physicians and his friends, he used his now clouded faculties sufficiently to complete *Count Robert of Paris* and to write *Castle Dangerous*, both of which were published the same year. In the autumn of this year he yielded to the persuasion of his friends, and set sail for the Mediterranean in a frigate placed at his disposition by the government, in the hope of restoring his shattered health. After visiting Malta, Naples, and Rome, where he was received with the greatest courtesy and paid the highest honors, he became anxious to get back to Scotland. At Nimeguen, on the homeward journey, he was seized with what proved to be the final attack, and he was hurried home. Of the carriage journey to Abbotsford, Lockhart says: "He lay in the same torpid state during the first two stages on the road to Tweedside. But as we descended the vale of

the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognizing the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—'Gala water, surely,—Buckholm—Torwoodlee.' As we rounded the hill at Ladehope and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited, and when, turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight." [1]

The end soon came, and on September 21 the great man died.

"It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes." [1]

Five days later he was laid beside his wife, in the family vaults in Dryburgh Abbey.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

In a letter written in the autumn of 1802, Scott speaks of including in the third volume of his *Border Minstrelsy*, which was to appear the following year, "a long poem, . . . a kind of

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, VIII

romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horse sort of stanza." The poem thus alluded to was "The Lay of the Last Minstrel"; but it grew to such length that the original intention of publishing it in the *Border Minstrelsy* was abandoned, and it appeared in a volume by itself. Scott tells us that he began the poem at the request of the Countess of Dalkeith, whose imagination had been excited by the legend of a goblin named Gilpin Horner; and that after writing some opening stanzas he read them to two of his friends whose literary taste he respected, and, discouraged by their indifferent reception, abandoned the work. Learning shortly afterward that he had misunderstood his friendly critics, and that they earnestly wished him to proceed with the romance, he resumed and completed it. It was, furthermore, out of compliment to Lady Dalkeith that he laid the scene of the minstrel's recital at Newark Castle, the favorite residence of the first Duchess of Buccleuch, an ancestress of Lord Dalkeith. The verse form, he tells us, was suggested to him by hearing repeated the then unpublished poem of Coleridge's "Christabel." In fact, he acknowledged borrowing directly from it the line, "Jesu Maria, shield us well!" The plan of putting the poem into the mouth of the minstrel was a device hit upon by Scott after much thought. The subject was one that

at that time was hardly considered fit for poetical treatment. On first taking it up, he had intended to make out of it a kind of ballad or poetical romance, modelled after the rude metrical romances of the Middle Ages. But the poem grew under his hands into a long narrative of a Border raid, interwoven with a slight love story, and an account of the pranks of the mischievous goblin page. To offer to the public a poem so unusual, without in some way shifting responsibility from his own shoulders, or preparing his readers for the strangeness of the thing, was, he feared, somewhat hazardous. The creation of the old minstrel was a happy thought which completely solved the difficulty. The character in itself stirred the imagination; and the narrative, with its vivid pictures of a rude and warlike time, was highly appropriate from his lips.

The poem appeared in January, 1805, in a quarto edition of seven hundred and fifty copies. Of its reception Scott says, in his introduction to the edition of 1830:

"It would be great affectation not to own frankly that the Author expected some success from 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel.' The attempt to return to a more simple and natural style of poetry was likely to be welcomed at a time when the public had become tired of heroic hexameters, with all the buckram and

binding which belong to them of later days. But whatever might have been his expectations, whether moderate or unreasonable, the result left them far behind, for among those who smiled on the adventurous Minstrel were numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox. Neither was the extent of the sale inferior to the character of the judges who received the poem with approbation. Upwards of thirty thousand copies . . . were disposed of by the trade; and the Author had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits, in a calm attempt to account for his popularity."

Lockhart tells us that Scott underestimated the sale of the "Lay," and that by 1830 forty-four thousand copies had been sold in Great Britain alone. No single British poem had ever met with so remarkable a sale.

Francis Jeffrey, the ablest literary critic of the time, and the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, said of the poem:

"We consider this poem as an attempt to transfer the refinements of modern poetry to the matter and the manner of the ancient metrical romance. The author, enamoured of the lofty visions of chivalry, and partial to the strains in which they were formerly embodied, seems to have employed all the resources of his

genius in endeavoring to recall them to the favor and admiration of the public, and in adapting to the taste of modern readers, a species of poetry which was once the delight of the courtly, but has long ceased to gladden any other eyes than those of the scholar and the antiquary. This is a romance, therefore, composed by a minstrel of the present day; or such a romance as we may suppose would have been written in modern times if that style of composition had continued to be cultivated, and partakes consequently of the improvements which every branch of literature has received since the time of its desertion."

"From this little sketch of the story, our readers will easily perceive that, however well calculated it may be for the introduction of picturesque imagery, or the display of extraordinary incident, it has but little pretension to the praise of a regular or coherent narrative. The magic of the lady, the midnight visit to Melrose, and the mighty book of the enchanter, which occupy nearly one-third of the whole poem, and engross the attention of the reader for a long time after the commencement of the narrative, are of no use whatsoever in the subsequent development of the fable, and do not contribute, in any degree, either to the production or explanation of the incidents that follow. The whole character and proceedings of the

goblin page, in like manner, may be considered as merely episodical; for though he is employed in some of the subordinate incidents, it is remarkable that no material part of the fable requires the intervention of supernatural agency. The young Buccleugh might have wandered into the wood, although he had not been decoyed by a goblin; and the dame might have given her daughter to the deliverer of her son, although she had never listened to the prattlement of the river and mountain spirits. There is, besides all this, a great deal of gratuitous and digressive description, and the whole sixth canto may be said to be redundant. The story should naturally end with the union of the lovers; and the account of the feast, and the minstrelsy that solemnized their betrothal, is a sort of epilogue, superadded after the catastrophe is complete."

This criticism is not altogether just. It is not true that "the magic of the lady, the midnight visit to Melrose, and the mighty book of the enchanter . . . are of no use whatsoever in the subsequent development of the fable, and do not contribute, in any degree, either to the production or explanation of the incidents that follow." It is the magic of the lady that enables her to interpret the voices of the Spirit of the Flood and the Spirit of the Fell, and so

learn that trouble is impending over Branksome Castle; and it is to meet these troubles successfully that she sends William of Deloraine to Melrose for "the mighty book of the enchanter." The meeting between Deloraine and Cranstoun is the direct result of the visit to Melrose, and leads to the theft of the book, the luring of the boy into the wood, his consequent capture, the raid, and the subsequent combat between Musgrave and Cranstoun. It is true that the main incidents of the narrative *might* have been brought about without the introduction of the goblin page, but they are not. The supernatural agency is introduced in the first canto, and *is* of use "in the subsequent development of the fable," and *does* contribute to the production and explanation of the events that follow. Jeffrey's criticism that "the whole sixth canto may be said to be redundant" is just. Scott himself felt this. In a letter written soon after the appearance of the poem he says, alluding to Jeffrey's criticism: "The sixth canto is altogether redundant; for the poem should certainly have closed with the union of the lovers, when the interest, if any, was at an end. But what could I do? I had my book and my page still on my hands, and must get rid of them at all events. Manage them as I would, their catastrophe must have been insufficient

to occupy an entire canto; so I was fain to eke it out with the songs of the minstrels." [1]

Though the omission of this last canto would have improved the poem from the point of view of unity, it would certainly have deprived us of some of its best passages. The canto opens with the famous lines:

> Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land!

It also contains the vivid picture of the betrothal banquet when—

> . . . from the lofty balcony,
> Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
> Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
> Loudly they spoke, and loudly laughed;
> Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
> To ladies fair; and ladies smiled.
> The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
> The clamour joined, with whistling scream,
> And flapped their wings, and shook their bells,
> In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
> Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
> From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
> Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
> And all is mirth and revelry.

Without this canto, too, we should lose the pathetic ballads of the minstrels, Albert Græme

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, II

and Harold, and the dignified ending of the "Hymn for the Dead." The truth is that the redundancy of the sixth canto is only one of the obvious structural faults of the poem. The whole poem is crude in form. The episodes are not smoothly dovetailed; the poem is not welded into a harmonious whole. Scott himself gives the reason for this in the letter before quoted: "I began a few verses to be called the Goblin Page; and they lay long by me, till the applause of some friends whose judgment I valued induced me to resume the poem; so on I wrote, knowing no more than the man in the moon how I was to end. . . . In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities, I suppose) to slink downstairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there." [1]

But if we look from the defects of the poem to its beauties, we shall find plenty to be grateful for. The whole episode of Deloraine's visit to Melrose is interesting. The opening lines of Canto II are justly celebrated. Furthermore, a striking contrast is drawn between the "Monk of St. Mary's aisle" and the bluff moss-trooper, who impatiently scorns the churchman's warning with the curt reply:

[1] Lockhart's *Life*, II

> Penance, father, will I none;
> Prayer know I hardly one;
> For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
> Save to patter an Ave Mary,
> When I ride on a Border foray.
> Other prayer can I none;
> So speed me my errand, and let me be gone.

And the scene at the grave of Michael is weirdly picturesque. Equally good in a different way is the scene describing the capture of the boy by the English yeomen. In the description of the appearance of the bloodhound and of the chief yeoman, one feels that the poet had a task that he keenly enjoyed. The same relish appears in the account of Watt Tinlinn's entrance to the castle.

It was, after all, not the goblin page that chiefly interested the poet, but the old-time Scots and their customs. He had a wholesome love for sturdy men, a keen eye for the picturesque, and was fond of a fight.

> Black John of Akeshaw and Fergus Græme,
> Fast upon my traces came,
> Until I turned at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
> And shot their horses in the bog.
> Slew Fergus with my lance outright —
> I had him long at high despite:
> He drove my cows last Eastern's night.[1]

This same love of fighting leads him into the

[1] Canto IV, 85-91.

interesting digression concerning the winning of Eskdale, and the punishment of the refractory Beattisons.

One of the best passages in the poem is that which describes the approach of the English to Branksome.[1] It is in verse of this sort that Scott is at his best. The pageantry of war, the pomp of military display, appealed to him very strongly. His poetry does not touch the deeper feelings, but deals chiefly with externals. He fills the eye with brilliant pictures of glittering warriors and prancing chargers. He makes you hear the blare of trumpets, the rattle of armor, and the clash of arms. He stirs all your savage fighting instincts, and wakens in you the enthusiasm of the young volunteer. For the time you are lifted up out of your workaday duties, breathe the stimulating atmosphere of this realm of romance, and return refreshed to the everyday world. Scott should be read for entertainment, and approached in this spirit "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" will yield a profitable return.

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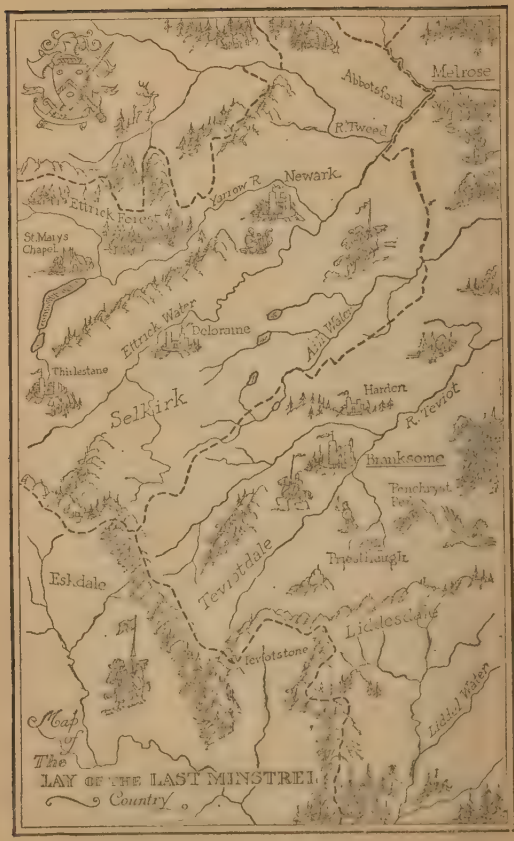
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL


Abbotsford
Melrose
R. Tweed
Yarrow R.
Newark
Ettrick Forest
St. Mary's Chapel
Ettrick Water
Dolorane
Ash Wale
Thirlestane
Selkirk
Harden
R. Teviot
Branksome
Penchryst Pen
Tripplehaugh
Eskdale
Teviotdale
Liddesdale
Teviotstone
Liddel Water
Map of The LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL
Country

The Lay of the Last Minstrel

INTRODUCTION

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek and tresses gray,
Seemed to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey° borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time°

Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower°
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh:
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door°
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess° marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis,° dead and gone,

And of Earl Walter,° rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth° to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained;
The aged Minstrel audience gained.
But when he reached the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,

But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had played it to King Charles the Good,°
When he kept court in Holyrood;°
And much he wished, yet feared, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lightened up his faded eye
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

'Twas thus the Latest Minstrel sung.

CANTO FIRST

I

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,°
And the Ladye° had gone to her secret bower,°
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria,° shield us well!
No living wight,° save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II

The tables were drawn,° it was idlesse° all;
Knight and page and household squire
Loitered through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,°
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.°

III

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;

Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;°
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel;
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corselet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred.

V

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,°
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barded° with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe° at saddle-bow;

A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

VI

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?°
Why watch these warriors, armed, by night?
They watch to hear the blood-hound baying:
They watch to hear the war-horn braying:
To see St. George's red cross° streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
They watch against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,°
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.°

VII

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter° fell!
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin°
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII

Can piety the discord heal,
  Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
  Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
  In mutual pilgrimage,° they drew;
Implored in vain the grace divine
  For chiefs their own red falchions slew:
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
  While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
  Shall never, never be forgot!

IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier°
  The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
  Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
  Had locked the source of softer woe;
And burning pride and high disdain
  Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,°
  Her son lisped from the nurse's knee—

"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire,
And wept in wild despair.
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love and anxious fear
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's altered eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,°
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk° of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learned the art that none may name,°
In Padua,° far beyond the sea.

Men said he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery;
For when in studious mood he paced
St. Andrew's cloistered hall,°
His form no darkening shadow traced°
Upon the sunny wall!

XII

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,°
And listens to a heavy sound
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side°?
Is it the wind, that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs° bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.

In the hall, both squire and knight
  Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
  But the night was still and clear!

XIV

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
  The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
  And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.°

XV

RIVER SPIRIT

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

—"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,°
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
  To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
  Trip it deft and merrily.

Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"—

XVI

RIVER SPIRIT

"Tears of an imprisoned° maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

XVII

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

"Arthur's slow wain° his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt° is dim:
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower
Till pride be quelled, and love be free."

XVIII

The unearthly voices ceased,
And the heavy sound was still;
It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbbed high with pride:—
"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper,° the boy
The truncheon° of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall right merrily
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts of rugged mould
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.

For the gray warriors prophesied
  How the brave boy, in future war
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,°
  Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
  One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
  As she paused at the arched door:
Then, from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.°

XXI

A stark° moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couched Border lance by knee;
Through Solway sands,° through Tarras moss,°
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns,° by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
In Eske or Liddel fords were none
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight or matin prime:°
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;

Five times outlawed had he been
By England's King and Scotland's Queen.°

XXII

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's° night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross of bloody red
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!°
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!—"

XXIV

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;

Ere break of day," the warrior gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never one,
Were't my neck-verse at Hairibee.°"

XXV

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he passed,
Soon crossed the sounding barbican,°
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet° nod;
He passed the Peel° of Goldiland,
And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,°
Where Druid shades° still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark:—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoined,
And left the friendly tower behind.

He turned him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horseliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.°

XXVII

A moment now he slacked his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corselet-band,
And loosened in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags° the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric° reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove
Ambition is no cure for love.

XXVIII

Unchallenged, thence passed Deloraine
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill,° from mountains freed,

Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
  Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded from counter° to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart and Our Ladye's° grace,
At length he gained the landing-place.

XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man° won,
  And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon°;
  For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallowed morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;

When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day°;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros'° rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he passed, had curfew° rung,
Now midnight lauds° were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp° whose magic tone
Is wakened by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reached 'twas silence all;
He meetly° stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell;
Dejectedly and low he bowed,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seemed to seek, in every eye,

If they approved his minstrelsy;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age and wandering long
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,°
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they longed the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the aged man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND

I

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel° glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seemed framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls° that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruined pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II

Short halt did Deloraine make there:
Little recked he of the scene so fair;

With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"—
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket opened wide:
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood
To fence° the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,°
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod;
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,°
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."—

From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
With toil his stiffened limbs he reared;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V

And strangely on the knight looked he,
And his blue eyes gleamed wild and wide;
"And darest thou, Warrior, seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Wouldst thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"

VI

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."—

VII

Again on the knight looked the churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high:—
Now, slow and faint, he led the way
Where, cloistered round, the garden lay°;
The pillared arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII

Spreading herbs and flowerets bright
Glisten with the dew of night;
Nor herb nor floweret glistened there
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;
Sudden the flying jennet° wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.

He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The keystone° that locked each ribbed aisle
Was a fleur-de-lys or a quatre-feuille;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars,° with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X

Full many a scutcheon° and banner riven°
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale°;
And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy low and lonely urn,°
O gallant Chief of Otterburne°!
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale°!
O fading honors of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI

The moon on the east oriel° shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined;

Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;
Then framed a spell when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Showed many a prophet and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael° brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's° pride.
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII

They sate them down on a marble stone,
A Scottish monarch° slept below;
Thus spoke the monk in solemn tone:—
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries° I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII

"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott°;
A wizard of such dreaded fame

That when, in Salamanca's cave,°
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame°!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,°
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone.
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV

"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed.
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,

Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell tolled one, and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel° was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the wizard's grave.

XVI

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel passed,
The banners waved without a blast"—
Still spoke the monk, when the bell tolled one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;

Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night.
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the monk to the broad flag-stone
Which the Bloody Cross was traced upon°:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the warrior took;
And the monk made a sign with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent,
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Showed the monk's cowl and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-browed warrior's mail,
And kissed his waving plume.

XIX

Before their eyes the wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver rolled,
He seemed some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice° wrapped him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
  Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
  The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
  And neither known remorse nor awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he owned;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
  When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
And the priest prayed fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

Before their eyes the wizard lay.

XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had prayed,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those thou mayst not look upon
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night returned in double gloom:
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the knight and priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern° gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,

And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII

"Now, hie thee hence," the father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye and sweet St. John
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"
The monk returned him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell,
The monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasped fast, as if still he prayed.

XXIV

The knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he passed the tombstones gray
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom pressed,
Felt like a load upon his breast,
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day

Began to brighten Cheviot gray;
He joyed to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV

The sun had brightened Cheviot gray,
The sun had brightened the Carter's side°;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And wakened every flower that blows;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle° so hastilie°;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie?
Why does she stop and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair;
And why does she pat the shaggy bloodhound,
As he rouses him up from his lair;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother heard her tread;
The Ladye caresses the rough bloodhound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round;
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light,
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately and young and tall,
Dreaded in battle and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon pressed;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;

Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:
Ye ween to hear a melting tale
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blushed and how she sighed,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stayed,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI

Beneath an oak, mossed o'er by eld,°
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear:
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.

'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trode,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket tossed,
A leap of thirty feet and three
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismayed;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elfish Dwarf with the Baron stayed;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock:
And oft apart his arms he tossed,
And often muttered "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,°
But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been° ta'en or slain,
An° it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage°
Talked of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIII

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elfish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes:
For there, beside Our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome° gathered a band
Of the best that would ride at her command:
The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to Saint Mary's lake ere day;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burned the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIV

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,

And signs to the lovers to part and fly:
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel-grove
Flew like the startled cushat-dove°:
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he poured the lengthened tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the withered hand of age
A goblet, crowned with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.°
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop filled his eye,
Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheered a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaffed;
And he, emboldened by the draught,
Looked gayly back to them, and laughed.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swelled his old veins, and cheered his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD

I

And said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly° fire was fled,
And my poor withered heart was dead,
  And that I might not sing of love? —
How could I to the dearest theme
That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
  So foul, so false a recreant° prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed°;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed°;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,

He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking° on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
Was dark with sweat and splashed with clay;
His armor red with many a stain:
He seemed in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the livelong night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He marked the crane on the Baron's crest°;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That marked the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce and proud reply
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seemed to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheeled around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sighed a sigh, and prayed a prayer;

The meeting of these champions proud
Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sighed nor prayed,
Nor saint nor ladye called to aid;
But he stooped his head, and couched his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI

Stern was the dint° the Borderer lent°!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield, and jack,° and acton,° passed,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior, saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurled on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward passed his course;
Nor knew—so giddy rolled his brain—
His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII

But when he reined his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift° will be at my dying day."

VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin-Page behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corselet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvelled a knight of pride
Like a book-bosomed priest° should ride:
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp:

For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristened hand,
Till he smeared the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read;
It had much of glamour° might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling° seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretched him on the plain
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismayed,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he muttered, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
No more the elfin page durst try
Into the wondrous book to pry;
The clasps, though smeared with Christian gore,

Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive°;
It was not given by man alive.

XI

Unwillingly himself he addressed
To do his master's high behest:
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all;
And each did after swear and say,
There only passed a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye°
Was always done maliciously;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood welled freshly from the wound.

XII

As he repassed the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:

He thought to train° him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seemed to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher° passing out.

XIII

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook;
The running stream dissolved the spell,°
And his own elfish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,°
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:°
But his awful mother° he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowled on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding crossed,
And laughed, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

XIV

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frightened, as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,

The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He feared to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journeyed on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher;
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wildered child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glowed 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat° on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
But still in act to spring;

When dashed an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stayed,
He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

XVI

The speaker issued from the wood,
And checked his fellow's° surly mood,
And quelled the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burned face:
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reached scantly to his knee;

And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbished sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,°
No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,°
Would strike below the knee:
His slackened bow was in his hand,
And the leash that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face and courage free
Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott from Esk to Tweed;

And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows and thy bow,
I'll have thee hanged to feed the crow!"—

XX

"Gramercy° for thy good-will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,°
  Our wardens° had need to keep good order;
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
  Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
I think our work is well begun,
When he have taken thy father's son."

XXI

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seemed to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinched, and beat, and overthrew;
Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.

He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,°
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,°
And wofully scorched the hackbuteer.°
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guessed
That the young Baron was possessed!

XXII

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispelled;°
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wondered to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretched along;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanched the blood;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;°

But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And washed it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted as if she galled his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toiled; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV

So passed the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoyed and blessed the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and blessed
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
Touched a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
Her golden hair streamed free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,°
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tightened breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!°

XXVI

The Warder viewed it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river rung around.
The blast alarmed the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset° glared,
And helms and plumes, confusedly tossed,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII

The Seneschal,° whose silver hair
Was reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,

And issued forth his mandates loud:—
"On Penchryst glows a bale° of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire;°
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warden of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin and clan and friends to raise."

XXVIII

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard far below the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamor dread,
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty rout,
The horsemen galloped forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,

To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
And ruddy blushed the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven.
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleamed on many a dusky tarn,
Haunted by the lonely earn;°
On many a cairn's gray pyramid,°
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra° and Dumpender Law;°
And Lothian° heard the Regent's° order,
That all should bowne° them for the Border.

XXX

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal:

Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep° and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;°
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yelled within.

XXXI

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the gray Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile;
Cheered the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said that there were thousands ten;
And others weened that it was nought
But Leven Clans,° or Tynedale men,°
Who came to gather in black-mail;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So passed the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,

So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"
Upon the harp he stooped his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear, that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH

I

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
  The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
  Along thy wild and willowed shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
  As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they rolled upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
  Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II

Unlike the tide of human time,
  Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime,
  Its earliest course was doomed to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
  Low as that tide has ebbed with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
  Fell by the side of great Dundee.°

Why, when the volleying musket played
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III

Now over Border dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh and mountain cell°
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Showed southern ravage was begun.

IV

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn,° from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers' knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St. Barnabright'

They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew
In vain he never twanged the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."°

V

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag° to hag,
Could bound like any Billhope stag.°
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf was all their train;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-browed,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely formed, and lean withal;
A battered morion° on his brow;
A leather jack,° as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A Border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seemed newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:—
"Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut-men,°
Who have long lain at Askerten:
They crossed the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burned my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barnyard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw and Fergus Græme
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turned at Priesthaugh Scrogg,°
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Fastern's° night."

VII

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirmed the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand

Three thousand armed Englishmen.
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,°
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting-place°
Was but lightly held of his gay ladye.

VIII

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleuch's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane° brave
Arrayed beneath a banner bright.
The tressured fleur-de-luce° he claims
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamped by Fala's mossy wave,°
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines revealed,—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX

An aged Knight,° to danger steeled,
With many a moss-trooper, came on;

And azure in a golden field,°
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood° tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosomed mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plundered England low;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms
In youth might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurned at rest,
And still his brows the helmet pressed,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow.
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X

Scotts of Eskdale,° a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.

Hearken, Ladye, to the tale°
How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The Earl was gentle and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
High of heart and haughty of word,
Little they recked of a tame liege lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seigniory° to claim:
Of Gilbert the Galliard° a heriot° he sought,
Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
—"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he helped me at pinch of need;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."—
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.

In haste to Branksome's lord he spoke,
Saying, "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast° of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurred amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the mist of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."

XII

Loudly the Beattison laughed in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot

To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse
That the dun deer started at fair Craikcross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the gray mountain-mist there did lances appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din
That the echoes answered from Pentoun linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied and lances broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through:
Where the Beattisons' blood mixed with the rill,
The Galliard's Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scattered the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name,

From Yarrow-cleugh° to Hindhaugh-swair,°
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.°
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye marked the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shall teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."—

XIV

Well may you think the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shrieked, and shed full many a tear,
And moaned and plained° in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.

Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blushed blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.°—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!"

XV

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omened elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and reared amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they crossed,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laughed,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft°
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon healed again,
Yet, as he ran, he yelled for pain;

And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs from below
Proclaimed the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's° sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers,° all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men° were at hand:

A hardy race, on Irthing° bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Arrayed beneath the banner tall
That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall;°
And minstrels, as they marched in order,
Played, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, owned no lord:
They were not armed like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting° guns;
Buff coats, all frounced° and broidered o'er,
And morsing-horns° and scarfs they wore;
Each better° knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;°
All, as they marched, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX

But louder still the clamor grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,

When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men-at-arms, with glaive° and spear,
Brought up the battle's° glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs,° in arms was seen;
With favor in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthened lines display;
Then called a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX

Now every English eye, intent,
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan°
Gleamed axe and spear and partisan;°
Falcon° and culver,° on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armor frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reeked like a witch's caldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breastplate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chastened fire, to prance,
And, high curvetting, slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand°
Displayed a peeled willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.°
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,°
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,°
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads° you swith° return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest,

St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."—

XXIII

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
"May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms° shall show
Both why we came and when we go."
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around leaned on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dressed,
The lion argent° decked his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,

He led a boy of blooming hue—

And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.°
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason pain.°
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even°
He pricked to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widowed dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,°
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretched his little arms on high;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,°
Gushed to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frowned;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast,
She locked the struggling sigh to rest;

Unaltered and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI

"Say to your Lords of high emprise,°
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him by oath° of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honor's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swelled Ancram's ford;°
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,°
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubbed a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,°
Our moat the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII

Proud she looked round, applause to claim—

Then lightened Thirlestane's eye of flame;
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answered wide,
And forward bent each southern spear;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;
But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman galloped from the rear.

XXVIII

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
"What treason has your march betrayed?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw°
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;°
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,
Beneath the eagle and the rood:
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;

And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wandered long;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurred all night to show
The mustering of the coming foe."—

XXIX

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers displayed,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid! —
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion° e'er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,

Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight; and if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's crossed,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he stayed,
And slow and sullenly obeyed.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet called, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,

And thus the terms of fight he said:—
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharmed,
In peaceful march, like men unarmed,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsaid:°
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew
How tardy was the Regent's aid;
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience° own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists° should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle on a lawn:
They fixed the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;

When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV

I know right well that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, whenas the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial harper,° taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought.
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,°
In the old Douglas' day.
He brooked not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stained with blood,
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV

Why should I tell the rigid doom
That dragged my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens° tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him
Who died at Jedwood Air?°
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer, —
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvelled the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbor now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;

Of chiefs, who under their gray stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's° head
The fading wreath for which they bled;
In sooth, 'twas strange this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear.
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH

I

Call it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies;
Who say tall cliff and cavern lone
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,

Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heaped with dead;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain.
The Chief, whose antique crownlet° long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom° once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die:
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill;
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III

Scarcely the hot assault was stayed,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appeared,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
Bright spears above the columns dun

Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair displayed
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV

Vails not to tell° each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches° came;
The Bloody Heart° blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne°
Their men in battle-order set;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.°
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,°
And Hepburn's mingled banners, come,
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;

And told them how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en°
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye prayed them dear°
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal,
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubbed, more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armor free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;

They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasped,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;°
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day;
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the football play.°

VII

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers,° now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change

Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

VIII

The blithesome signs of wassail gay
Decayed not with the dying day:
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang:
And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their stragglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

IX

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamors died:
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound, but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel

The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toiled there,
Strong pales° to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
Nor marked she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times,° from silken couch she rose;
While yet the bannered hosts repose,
She viewed the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;

Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior passed below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin° page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.°
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he crossed,
For° all the vassalage:

But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deemed, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright
Disgrace and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell°
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,

The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port° aroused each clan;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick Wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast
About the knight each favored most.

XV

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,

Strong, as it seemed, and free from pain,
In armor sheathed from top to toe,
Appeared, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walked,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talked
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,°
With satin slashed° and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade,° by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Called noble Howard Belted Will.

XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:

White was her wimple° and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broidered rein.
He deemed she shuddered at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguessed,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers° graced.

XVIII

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he longed to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;°
While to each knight their care assigned
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look or sign or word,

Aid to a champion to afford,
  On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate heralds spoke:—

XIX

ENGLISH HERALD

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
  Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
  For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
  Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
  So help him God and his good cause!"

XX

SCOTTISH HERALD

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soiled his coat:
  And that, so help him God above!
  He will on Musgrave's body prove
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"—

LORD HOME

—"God defend the right!"—
Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid-list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood poured down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife, and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore[9] with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorned, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.

XXII

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretched him on the bloody plain;

He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
  Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's° iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII

In haste the holy Friar sped:—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
  As through the lists he ran:
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hailed the conqueror's victory,
  He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneeled down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
  Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly° comfort on his heart,
  And bids him trust in God!

Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver° did he not unclasp,
Marked not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the thronged array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He crossed the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard looked around,
As dizzy and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed:
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kissed,
And often pressed him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbbed at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deigned she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united prayed
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI

She looked to river, looked to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,°
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquished me;
Their influence kindly stars may shower°
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quelled, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:—
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;

She took fair Margaret by the hand.

For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."—

XXVII

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armor dight,°
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And lingered till he joined the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII

William of Deloraine some chance
Had wakened from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarmed, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,°
He greeted him right heartilie:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he looked down;
Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made:—

XXIX

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark
Of Naworth Castle long months three,
Till ransomed for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.°
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear!°
'Twas pleasure, as we looked behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark blood-hound° on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

XXX

So mourned he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.

They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levelled lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,°
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,°
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hushed the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.°

After due pause, they bade him tell
Why he, who touched the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,

Wander a poor and thankless soil,°
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it ranked so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still that scornful jeer
Misprized° the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH

I

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
  This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
  From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia![°] stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,

Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as,° to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's stream° still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,°
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorned like me! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron gate;

They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

Me lists not at this tide declare
  The splendor of the spousal rite,°
How mustered in the chapel fair
  Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches° rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furred with miniver;°
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she feared each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought not by forbidden spell;
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:°

Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art,
But this for faithful truth I say,
  The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
  And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroidered and entwined,
Guarded° with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin° sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, wth heedful haste,
Marshalled the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew,° and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,°
And o'er the boar-head,° garnished brave,
And cygnet° from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan° and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,

Rung trumpet, shalm,° and psaltery:°
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laughed;
Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair; and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
The clamor joined with whistling scream,
And flapped their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers° ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humor highly crossed,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote with his gauntlet stout Hunthill;
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's save,

Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove,° and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog° found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.°

VIII

The dwarf, who feared his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revelled as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.°
Watt Tinlinn there did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit° them on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,

Foamed forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one:
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch° the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remembered him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter jibe and taunting jest;
Told how he fled at Solway strife,°
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venomed wound and festering joint
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flagons overturned.
Riot and clamor wild began;
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned, and muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stepped forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the Land Debatable;°
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI

ALBERT GRÆME

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,°
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all.

XII

That wine she had not tasted well,°
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all!

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,°
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And died for her sake in Palestine;
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII

As ended Albert's simple lay,
  Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay
  Renowned in haughty Henry's court:°
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey° loved his lyre—
  Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
  And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV

They sought, together, climes afar,
  And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
  They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stayed,
  And deemed that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
  Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
  The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,

When Surrey, of the deathless lay,°
Ungrateful Tudor's° sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,°
Windsor's green glades and courtly bowers,°
And, faithful to his patron's name,°
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favorite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI

FITZTRAVER

'Twas All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight° to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might:
On cross, and character, and talisman,°
And almagest,° and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!

O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,[°]
Some strain that seemed her inmost soul to find:—
That favored strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy rolled the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed,[°] the plundered shrine,[°]
The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song;

These° hated Henry's name as death,
And those° still held the ancient faith.°—
Then, from his seat, with lofty air
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;
St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;°
Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay; —
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland° rave,
As if grim Odin° rode her wave;
And watched, the whilst, with visage pale
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might fancy cull;
For thither came, in times afar,
Stern Lochlin's° sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
Skilled to prepare the raven's food;°
Kings of the main° their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.°
And there, in many a stormy vale,

The Scald° had told his wondrous tale;
And many a Runic column° high
Had witnessed grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learned many a Saga's° rhyme uncouth,—
Of that Sea-Snake,° tremendous curled,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids° whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of Chiefs° who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,°
Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers° young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learned a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mixed with the softer numbers well.

XXIII

HAROLD

O, listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,°
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch° and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

" 'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

" 'Tis not because the ring they ride,°
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not filled by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.°

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,°
Each baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy° and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,°
And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbor's face,
Could scarce his own stretched hand behold.
A secret horror checked the feast,
And chilled the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elfish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, "Found! found! found!"

XXV

Then sudden, through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,

Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elfish page it broke.
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elfish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimmed each lofty look.
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismayed as Deloraine:
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'Twas feared his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,

Like him of whom the story ran,°
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold,
That he had seen right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapped around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew—but how it mattered not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale;
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight°
Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some blest saint his prayers addressed:
Some to St. Modan made their vows,
Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to Our Ladye of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,

And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were prayed,
'Tis said the noble Dame, dismayed,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell:
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,°
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath°
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthened row:
No lordly look, nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;

Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallowed side,
And there they knelt them down:
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the lettered stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnished niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frowned.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,°
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper, and host,° and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourished fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred° Abbot stretched his hand,
And blessed them as they kneeled;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And prayed they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells tolled out their mighty peal
For the departed spirit's weal;

And ever in the office close°
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burden° of the song—
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,°
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
While the pealing organ rung;
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSHED is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?

Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,°
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,°
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,°
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,°
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

LINE 13. **palfrey:** a horse ridden for pleasure, as distinguished from a war-horse.

20. **A stranger:** William III, who succeeded James II, the last of the Stuart kings of England, in 1689.

21. **The bigots of the iron time:** the Puritans of the time of the Commonwealth, who severely denounced all kinds of amusement. In 1656 Parliament went so far as to pass an ordinance declaring "that if any person or persons, commonly called fidlers or minstrels, shall at any time be taken playing, fidling, and making music, in any Inn, Alehouse, or Tavern, . . . every such person or persons, so taken, shall be adjudged, and are hereby adjudged and declared to be rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars."—Minto, quoted by Rolfe.

27. **Newark's stately tower:** Newark Castle, beautifully situated on the Yarrow, about three miles west of Selkirk, was built by James II. Later it became the property of the Buccleuch family. It was made the scene of the minstrel's recitation probably because the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth was brought up there.

35. **iron.** Used here both in the literal sense of studded or strengthened with iron, and figuratively in the sense of hard and pitiless.

37. **The Duchess:** "Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685."—*Scott's note.*

49. **Earl Francis:** "Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess."—*Scott's note.*

50. **Earl Walter:** "Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess, and a celebrated warrior."—*Scott's note.*

57. **sooth.** truth. The word is now obsolete except in poetry.

80. **King Charles the Good:** Charles I, who was at Holyrood in 1633, when he was crowned King of Scotland; and in 1641, when he came to obtain the aid of the Scotch Presbyterians, in his struggle with the English Parliament.

81. **Holyrood:** the royal palace in Edinburgh, named after the adjoining abbey, which was founded in 1128 by David I of Scotland. Tradition says that the King intended to deposit in the abbey the holy *rood* or fragment of the true cross, brought to Scotland by his mother.

CANTO FIRST

1. **Branksome tower:** Branxholme castle, situated on the Teviot about three miles above Hawick, was originally a well-fortified Border stronghold. Part of the original structure still stands.

2. **Ladye.** The old spelling is used to give an antique air to the poem.

bower: Chamber.

5. **Jesu Maria, shield us well.** Scott acknowledged having taken these lines from Coleridge's "Christabel." Cf. ll. 53-54:

> "Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
> Jesu Maria, shield her well!"

6. **wight:** This word used as a noun means creature; as an adjective, strong or active.

8. **drawn.** Drawn aside after dinner to leave more room. **It was idlesse all.** All were at leisure.

13. **the rushy floor.** In the Middle Ages floors were covered with rushes, which, when soiled, were easily replaced by fresh ones. The presence chamber of Queen Elizabeth is said to have been thus carpeted.

15. **From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.** See map.

19. **to bower from stall.** To the house from the stable.

36. **wight:** Strong. Cf. 6, note.

38. **Barded.** Protected by armor; used of horses.

39. **Jedwood-axe.** "'Of a truth,' says Froissart, 'the Scottish cannot boast great skill with the bow, but rather bear axes, with which, in time of need, they give heavy strokes.' The Jedwood-axe was a sort of partisan, used by horsemen, as appears from the arms of Jedburgh, which bear a cavalier mounted, and armed with this weapon. It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddart staff."—*Scott's note.*

42. **dight:** equipped.

46. **Saint George's red cross:** the English banner, named after the patron saint of England.

49. **Lest Scroop or Howard or Percy's powers.** Lord Scroop, Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and Lord William Howard were at different times wardens of the English "marches" or borderlands.

51. **Warkworth or Naworth or merry Carlisle:** the castles of Percy, Howard, and Scroop, respectively.

58. **Lord Walter.** "Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch . . . was a brave and powerful baron, and Warden of the West Marches of Scotland. His death was the consequence of a feud between the Scotts and the Kerrs." . . .—*Scott's note.*

61. **Dunedin:** Edinburgh.

70. **In mutual pilgrimage.** "Among other expedients resorted to for stanching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, there was a bond executed in 1529, between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel."—*Scott's note.*

78-93. **In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier.** Cf. Tennyson's "Princess":

> "Home they brought her warrior dead" etc.

83-91. **Until, amid his sorrowing clan.** Cf. the ballad "Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night":

> "Oh, then bespoke his little son,
> As he sat on his nurse's knee,
> 'If ever I live to be a man
> My father's death revenged shall be.'"

104-107. **Her lover 'gainst her father's clan.** An allusion to a fight between the Kerrs or Carrs and the Scotts, which had taken place at Melrose.

112. **clerk:** scholar.

114. **the art that none may name:** magic.

115. **Padua.** "Padua was long supposed by the Scottish peasants to be the principal school of necromancy." *-Scott's note.*

119. **Saint Andrew's cloistered hall:** the University of St. Andrews.

120. **His form no darkening shadow traced.** "The shadow of a necromancer is independent of the sun. . . . The vulgar conceive, that when a class of students have made a certain progress in their mystic studies they are obliged to run through a subterraneous hall, where the devil literally catches the hindmost in the race, unless he crosses the hall so speedily that the arch-enemy can only apprehend his shadow. In the latter case, the person of the sage never after throws any shade; and those who have thus *lost their shadows* always prove the best magicians." *—Scott's note.*

127. **In old Lord David's western tower.** Sir David Scott was grandfather of the recently slain Sir Walter.

131. **scaur's red side.** A scaur was in Scottish dialect a precipitous bank of earth.

137. **ban-dogs:** dogs kept chained or bound; originally *band-dogs.*

151. **Fell:** a stony hill.

154. **From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen.** See map.

158. **Emerald rings.** Rings of bright-colored grass, frequently found on heaths or meadows, were supposed to be made by the feet of fairies. Cf. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream,* Act II, Sc. 1:

> "And I serve the fairy queen
> To dew her orbs upon the green."

"As the ground became parched under the feet of the

moonlight dancers, Puck's office was to refresh it with sprinklings of dew, thus making it greener than ever."—*Hudson.*

162. **imprisoned:** thwarted or opposed.

170. **Arthur's slow wain.** Another name for "Charles's Wain" or the "Great Dipper." Arthur is probably a corruption of Arcturus, one of the stars in the constellation. **wain:** wagon.

173. **Orion's studded belt.** Three stars in the constellation of Orion represent his belt.

197. **moss-trooper.** "This was the usual appellation of the marauders upon the Borders; a profession diligently pursued by the inhabitants on both sides. . . ."—*Scott's note.*

198. **truncheon:** Shaft or handle.

207-208. **the Unicorn's pride.** The head of a unicorn was one of the heraldic emblems of the Carr family. A star and two crescents appeared in the arms of the Scotts.

214. **William of Deloraine:** a retainer of the Buccleuch family who held adjoining lands.

215. **stark:** strong, rugged.

217. **Solway Sands.** The rapidity with which the tides rise in Solway Firth, together with the quicksands, makes passage over the sands very dangerous. Cf. *Redgauntlet*, letter iv. **Tarras Moss:** a bog on the Tarras Water, a tributary of the Esk.

219-220. **By wily turns.** "The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds. . . . Robert Bruce was repeatedly tracked by sleuth dogs. On one occasion, he escaped by wading a bow-shot down a brook, and ascending into a tree by a branch which overhung the water; thus, leaving no trace on land of his footsteps, he baffled the scent. . . .

"A sure way of stopping the dog was to spill blood upon the track, which destroyed the discriminating fineness of his scent. A captive was sometimes sacrificed on such occasions."—*Scott's note.*

226. **matin prime:** early morning. According to the

usage of the mediæval church, prime was the first hour of the day, six o'clock.

230. England's king and Scotland's queen: Edward VI and Mary, Queen of Scots.

241. St. Michael's night: Michaelmas, September 29.

249. lorn: lost. The participle still survives in *forlorn*.

258. Were't my neck-verse at Hairibee. "Hairibee was the place of executing the Border marauders at Carlisle. The *neck-verse* is the beginning of the 51st Psalm, *Miserere mei*, etc., anciently read by criminals claiming the benefit of clergy."—*Scott's note.*

"The clergy originally obtained freedom from secular jurisdiction on the strength of the text, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.' In process of time this benefit of clergy was claimed for everybody that could read, all such persons being handed over to be dealt with by ecclesiastical authority."—Minto, quoted by Rolfe.

261. barbican: the defence of the outer gate of a castle, often in the form of a long and narrow covered passage-way. That Scott had such a defence in mind is evident from his use of the adjective *sounding*.

264. basnet: a basin-shaped helmet.

265. Peel. A peel is a strong tower, surrounded by a yard enclosed by a high wall. Within this yard the cattle were placed on the occasion of an attack.

267. Moat-hill's mound. "This is a round artificial mound near Hawick, which, from its name (*Mot*, A. S. *Concilium*, *Conventus*), was probably anciently used as a place for assembling a national council of the adjacent tribes. There are many such mounds in Scotland, and they are sometimes, but rarely, of a square form."—*Scott's note.*

268. Druid shades: ghosts of the Druids or priests of the ancient Britons.

282. The Roman way: "an ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire."—*Scott's note.*

287. Minto-crags: "a romantic assemblage of cliffs, which rise suddenly above the vale of Teviot, in the immediate vicinity of the family-seat from which Lord Minto takes his title. A small platform, on a projecting crag,

commanding a most beautiful prospect, is termed *Barnhills' Bed*. This Barnhills is said to have been a robber, or outlaw. There are remains of a strong tower beneath the rocks, where he is supposed to have dwelt, and from which he derived his name."—*Scott's note.*

296. The warbling Doric reed. An allusion to a beautiful pastoral song written by Sir Gilbert Elliot, a descendant of the Lord Minto mentioned above. Doric reed: a stock phrase for poetry dealing with country life.

301. Allt. See map. "On its banks are several caves, one of which is said to have been a favorite retreat of Thomson the poet."—Rolfe's edition of the *Lay*.

311. counter: the lower part of a horse's neck and shoulders.

317. Our Ladye's grace: the protection of the Virgin Mary.

319. march-man: one dwelling on the marches or Borders.

321. Halidon. "An ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished. About a quarter of a mile to the northward lay the field of battle betwixt Buccleuch and Angus, which is called to this day the Skirmish Field."—*Scott's note.* Cf. Scott's drama *Halidon Hill*.

326. Prize to the victor of the day. The fight was brought on by the desire of the Scotts of Buccleuch to wrest the young King James V from the guardianship of the Earl of Douglas. The Carrs sided with Douglas. Carr of Cessford was killed by Elliott, a follower of the Scotts, and the spot was marked by a stone about half a mile above Abbotsford.

334. Old Melros'. Melrose Abbey. "The ancient and beautiful monastery of Melrose was founded by King David I. Its ruins afford the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture which Scotland can boast. The stone of which it is built, though it has resisted the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought. In some of the cloisters, as is hinted in the next Canto, there are representations of flowers,

vegetables, etc., carved in stone, with accuracy and precision so delicate that we almost distrust our senses, when we consider the difficulty of subjecting so hard a substance to such intricate and exquisite modulation. This superb convent was dedicated to St. Mary, and the monks were of the Cistertian order."—*Scott's note.*

337. **curfew:** a bell rung at night to signify that fires must be put out or covered. The hour established by William the Conqueror was eight o'clock. (From French *couvre-feu.*)

338. **lauds:** midnight services.

341-342. **that wild harp:** the Æolian harp, whose strings are vibrated by the wind.

344. **meetly:** suitably.

358. **in due degree:** in proper order of rank.

CANTO SECOND

6. **shafted oriel:** a window divided by shafts of stone.

12. **scrolls.** "The buttresses . . . are richly carved and fretted, containing niches for the statues of saints, and labelled with scrolls bearing appropriate texts of Scripture."—*Scott's note.*

28. **fence:** defend.

29. **rood:** rod; not to be confused with the word spelled the same, meaning cross.

30. **aventayle:** the visor of a helmet.

60. **drie:** endure or suffer.

66. **patter:** repeat. Probably derived from *pater,* the first word in the Latin version of the Lord's Prayer. **Ave Mary:** a prayer to the Virgin. The usual form is Ave Maria.

68. **can:** know.

77-79. **Where, cloistered round, the garden lay.** The garden lay in a kind of court, surrounded by a covered walk or cloister under which monks were buried.

90. **jennet:** a small Spanish horse.

98-100. **The keystone.** "The carved bosses at the intersection of the ribs of a vaulted ceiling cannot fairly be

called keystones. If they could be so called, it is not the 'aisles' that they lock. By *quatre-feuille*, the poet means the four-leaved flower which is so common an ornament in the Decorated style. I do not know any authority for this use of the word. *Quatrefoil* is applied to an opening pierced in four foils, much used in ornaments, but quite different from a four-leaved boss. A *corbel* is a projecting stone or piece of timber supporting a superincumbent weight, such as the shaft or small column which supports the ribs of a vault. They are carved and moulded in a great variety of ways, often, as in Melrose Abbey, in the form of heads and faces."—Minto, quoted by Rolfe.

101. **the pillars.** In Gothic churches the pillars are generally built in clusters.

104. **scutcheon:** a shield decorated with heraldic emblems. **riven:** torn. Old shields and battle flags had been hung up within the church.

106. **pale:** paling or screen.

108. **urn:** properly a vase in which the ashes of the cremated dead are kept; here used loosely in the sense of tomb.

109. **Gallant Chief of Otterburne.** "The famous and desperate battle of Otterburne was fought 15th August, 1388, betwixt Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James, Earl of Douglas. Both these renowned champions were at the head of a chosen body of troops, and they were rivals in military fame. . . . The issue of the conflict is well known: Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose beneath the high altar." —*Scott's note.*

110. **Dark Knight of Liddesdale.** William Douglas, a renowned and powerful knight, who, after committing many cruelties, was slain out of revenge and interred in Melrose Abbey.

113. **the east oriel.** "It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful specimen of the lightness and elegance of Gothic architecture, when in its purity, than the eastern window of Melrose Abbey."—*Scott's note.*

125. **Triumphant Michael:** St. Michael.

126. **Apostate:** Satan.

130. **A Scottish monarch.** "A large marble stone, in the chancel of Melrose, is pointed out as the monument of Alexander II, one of the greatest of our early kings."—*Scott's note.*

133-134. **For Paynim countries.** I have fought as a crusader in Pagan countries.

138. **Michael Scott:** a distinguished scholar of the thirteenth century, who, on account of his learning, acquired the reputation of being a magician. He is the hero of many legends.

140. **Salamanca's cave.** "Spain, from the relics, doubtless, of Arabian learning and superstition, was accounted a favorite residence of magicians. . . . There were public schools where magic, or rather the sciences supposed to involve its mysteries, were regularly taught, at Toledo, Seville, and Salamanca. In the latter city, they were held in a deep cavern." . . .—*Scott's note.*

142. **The bells would ring in Notre Dame.** An allusion to a legend concerning a journey said to have been made by Michael Scott to the French court, for the purpose of demanding redress for certain wrongs committed by French pirates on Scotch subjects. By his magic power he evoked the Devil, whom in the form of a black horse he compelled to carry him to Paris. When the French king refused Michael's demands, the magician warned the monarch not to make a final refusal until he had seen his horse stamp three times. The first stamp shook all the steeples in Paris and made the bells ring; the second overthrew three towers of the palace. The terrified king was only too glad to dismiss his unwelcome visitor with all the concessions demanded.

145-146. **The words that cleft Eildon hills in three.** "Michael Scott was, once upon a time, much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld*, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso; it was accomplished in one night, and still does honor to the infernal

architect. Michael next ordered that Eildon Hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into the three picturesque peaks which it now bears. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable demon, by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of sea-sand."—*Scott's note.*

169-170. **When the floor of the chancel.** When the reflection of St. Michael's red cross in the stained glass window was thrown by the moonlight on the chancel floor.

189. **traced upon:** reflected by the moonlight.

214. **A palmer's amice.** A palmer was one who had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He wore a palm branch in token of his journey. **amice:** a flowing cloak worn by pilgrims.

253. **postern:** a rear gate, generally smaller than the main entrance.

280. **nerves:** sinews.

287. **the Carter's side:** one of the Cheviot hills near the English border.

299. **kirtle:** gown. **hastilie:** archaic spelling like *ladye*, used also to emphasize the rhyme with *tie*.

352. **eld:** age.

353. **The Baron's dwarf.** "The idea of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page is taken from a being called Gilpin Horner, who appeared and made some stay at a farmhouse among the Border-mountains."—*Scott's note.*

377. **litherlie:** mischievous, ill-natured.

380. **had been:** would have been.

381. **An:** if.

382. **between Home and Hermitage:** throughout the Border: from Home Castle on the northeast to Hermitage Castle on the southwest.

390-402. **But the Ladye of Branksome.** The incident alluded to in these lines actually took place in 1557.

411. **cushat-dove.** wood-pigeon.

421. **blood of Velez' scorched vine:** Malaga wine. Velez is a town in the province of Malaga, on the southern coast of Spain. **Scorched:** ripened by the sun.

CANTO THIRD

3. **kindly**: natural.

8. **recreant**: coward.

11. **tunes the shepherd's reed**: inspires domestic poetry.

12. **mounts the warrior's steed**: instills strength and courage into the warrior.

24. **pricking**: spurring or riding. Cf. Canto Fourth, 411.

33. **the crane on the Baron's crest.** "The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto, Thou shalt want ere I want."—*Scott's note.*

53. **dint**: blow. **lent**: gave.

61. **jack**: This word was applied rather loosely, sometimes to a coat strengthened with plates or links of steel, sometimes to a padded garment worn under the armor. Here the coat of mail is probably meant. **acton**: a thickly padded coat worn under the armor.

82. **Short shrift**: brief time for confession.

90. **book-bosomed priest.** Scott says that monks were sometimes called Book-a-bosomes from carrying the mass-book in their bosoms.

103. **glamour.** "*Glamour*, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality."—*Scott's note.*

108. **sheeling**: a shepherd's hut.

125. **so mot I thrive**: a mild oath,—so might I prosper.

140. **gramarye**: magic.

146. **train**: draw or entice.

152. **lurcher**: a dog that lies in wait, *lurches* or lurks for game.

155. **The running stream dissolved the spell.** "It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable "Tam o'

Shanter" turns entirely upon such a circumstance. The belief seems to be of antiquity."—*Scott's note.*

157. **vilde**: an old form of vile.

160. **spleen**: spite.

161. **his awful mother**: the mother of the boy, inspiring awe because of her magical powers.

183. **furiouslie**: another example of a change of spelling to emphasize the rhyme. Cf. Canto Second, 299, note.

195. **bat**: staff.

205. **fellow's**: companion's.

225. **span**: an old English measure equal to about nine inches.

227-228. **He never counted him a man.** "Imitated from Drayton's account of Robin Hood and his followers. . . . To wound an antagonist in the thigh, or leg, was reckoned contrary to the law of arms."—*Scott's note.*

250. **Gramercy**: a corruption of the French *grand merci*, great thanks.

254. **comest to thy command**: succeed to thy rights as chieftain.

255. **wardens**: the wardens of the Border, appointed by the King to keep peace.

270. **Maudlin**: a corruption of Magdalen. **tire**: headdress.

272. **bandelier**: ammunition belt.

273. **hackbuteer**: a soldier armed with a hackbut, a kind of heavy musket. The word was variously spelled: hacbut, arquebus, and harkquebuss.

279. **had soon dispelled**: would have soon dispelled.

293-299. **No longer by his couch she stood.** A method of treatment apparently believed in by the superstitious Scotch and called "healing by sympathy." Scott notes that in Dryden's *Enchanted Island*, an altered version of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, a similar method of treatment is described.

321. **Penchryst Pen.** See map.

328. **fire of death**: signal of war.

356. **cresset**: a rude torch made by suspending on pivots at the end of a pole a metal pot or pan, in which was

placed a coil of rope saturated with oil, resin, or some such combustible material.

341. **seneschal**: the chief steward or officer of a castle.

345. **bale**: bundle of beacon fagots.

346. **Priesthaughswire**. See map.

386. **earn**: eagle.

387. **cairn's gray pyramid**. "The cairns, or piles of loose stones, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, and are found in other remarkable situations, seem usually, though not universally, to have been sepulchral monuments."—*Scott's note*.

390. **Soltra**: Soultra Hill, about fifteen miles southeast of Edinburgh. **Dumpender Law**: a hill near Haddington.

391. **Lothian**: a former division of Scotland, extending from the English boundary to the Firth of Forth. **Regent**: The Earl of Arran. The queen was at this time absent in France.

392. **bowne**: make ready. Cf. "Marmion," IV, 486-488:

> "Each ordering that his band
> Should bowne them with the rising day,
> To Scotland's camp to take their way."

399. **keep**: the main tower of a castle.

400. **To whelm the foe with deadly shower**. An allusion to the custom of throwing down heavy missiles, such as stones and beams, and even boiling oil and melted lead, on the besiegers during an attack.

415. **Leven clans**: freebooters from the neighborhood of the river Leven, in Cumberland, England. **Tyndale men**: marauders from the Tyne, a stream near the central part of the English Border.

CANTO FOURTH

20. **great Dundee**. The Viscount of Dundee, better known as Graham of Claverhouse, was slain in the battle of Killiecrankie, 1689. He is the subject of Scott's song, "Bonnie Dundee," and a character in the novel *Old Mortality*.

28. **For pathless marsh and mountain cell**. On the occasion of Border forays the peasants were accustomed to

hide in the marshes or in caves. Many of these caverns may still be seen in various parts of Scotland.

40. **Watt Tinlinn.** "This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was, by profession, a *sutor* [cobbler], but, by inclination and practice, an archer and warrior. Upon one occasion, the captain of Bewcastle, military governor of that wild district of Cumberland, is said to have made an incursion into Scotland, in which he was defeated and forced to fly. Watt Tinlinn pursued him closely through a dangerous morass; the captain, however, gained the firm ground; and seeing Tinlinn dismounted, and floundering in the bog, used these words of insult: 'Sutor Watt, ye cannot sew your boots; the heels *risp* [creak], and the seams *rive* [tear].' 'If I cannot sew,' retorted Tinlinn, discharging a shaft, which nailed the captain's thigh to his saddle, 'if I cannot sew, I can *yerk* [twitch the stitches tight].' "—*Scott's note.*

42. **snatchers:** plunderers.

44. **Saint Barnabright:** St. Barnabas' day, June 11, often called "Barnaby bright" or "Long Barnaby," because it was supposed to be the longest day in the year.

51. **Warden-Raid.** "An inroad commanded by the Warden in person."—*Scott's note.*

55. **hag:** "the broken ground in a bog."—*Scott's note.*

56. **Billhope stag.** "There is an old rhyme, which thus celebrates the places in Liddesdale remarkable for game:

> " 'Billhope braes for bucks and raes,
> And Carit haugh for swine,
> And Tarras for the good bull-trout,
> If he be ta'en in time.' "

"The bucks and roes, as well as the old swine, are now extinct; but the good bull-trout is still famous."—*Scott's note.*

64. **morion:** a steel cap or helmet without a movable visor for covering the face.

65. **Jack.** Cf. Canto Third, 61, note.

68. **six Scottish ells:** The Scottish ell was about thirty-seven inches.

76. **German hackbut-men.** Foreign soldiers were often employed by the English sovereigns at this time.

87. **Scrogg:** a shady wood.

91. **Fastern's night:** the night before the fast of Lent.

98. **Ettrick shade.** Ettrick forest. See map.

102. **Trysting-place.** Meeting place.

106-119. **His ready lances Thirlestane brave.** "Sir John Scott of Thirlestane flourished in the reign of James V, and possessed the estates of Thirlestane, Gamescleuch, etc., lying upon the river of Ettrick, and extending to St. Mary's Loch, at the head of Yarrow. It appears, that when James had assembled his nobility, and their feudal followers, at Fala, with the purpose of invading England, and was, as is well known, disappointed by the obstinate refusal of his peers, this baron alone declared himself ready to follow the King wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to bear a border of fleurs-de-luce, similar to the tressure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears for the crest; motto, *Ready, aye ready*."—*Scott's note.*

108. **tressured fleur-de-luce:** the figures of a fleur-de-luce, or fleur-de-lys,—as the word is more commonly spelled,—arranged in a tressure or border. The fleur-de-lys is a figure used in art, suggested by the iris or blue flag. See illustration in *Webster's Dictionary.*

110. **Fala's mossy wave.** Fala is a mossy district about twenty miles southeast of Edinburgh.

120. **An aged knight:** Walter Scott of Harden, commonly called Wat of Harden, an ancestor of the poet. In *Border Minstrelsy* Scott tells us that this famous personage "flourished during the reign of Queen Mary, was a renowned Border freebooter, concerning whom tradition has preserved a variety of anecdotes. . . . His castle was situated upon the very brink of a dark and precipitous dell, through which a scanty rivulet steals to meet the Borthwick. In the recess of this glen he is said to have kept his spoil, which served for the daily maintenance of his

retainers, until the production of a pair of clean spurs, in a covered dish, announced to the hungry band that they must ride for a supply of provisions. He was married to Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and called in song the Flower of Yarrow. He possessed a very extensive estate, which was divided among his five sons. There are numerous descendants of this old marauding Baron."

122. **azure in a golden field.** The arms of the Scotts at this time bore a crescent and blue stars on a surface of gold, and were without the *bend*, or band, inserted later on the marriage of one of the Scotts into the Murdiestone family.

125. **Oakwood Tower.** A well-preserved tower still standing in the vale of Ettrick, not far from Selkirk.

145. **Eskdale.** See map.

149. **Hearken, Ladye, to the tale.** The story which follows is historically true.

158. **Homage and seigniory:** whatever payment in respect, money, or property was due him as lord of the estate.

159. **Galliard:** gay or bold. **heriot:** Originally the arms of a tenant delivered on his death to the lord of the estate, later used of any offering.

177. **cast:** as many as would be let loose upon the game at once, generally a pair.

205. **He:** the lord of Branksome.

210. **Pentoun linn:** a rapid or waterfall in the Liddel.

219. **Haugh:** hill.

220. **Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair.** A cleugh is a glen or hollow in a hillside. A swair, or swire, is a hillslope.

229. **Bellenden.** "Bellenden is situated near the head of Borthwick Water, and being in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts, was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and gathering word."—*Scott's note.*

249. **plained:** complained.

258. **Rangleburn's lonely side.** The Rangleburn was a stream not far from Branksome.

274. **cloth-yard shaft:** an arrow as long as a stick used for measuring cloth.

291. **Almayn's:** German's.

299. **Kendal archers.** From Kendal in Westmoreland, celebrated for its green cloth as well as its archers.

303. **bill-men:** footsoldiers armed with bills, or long battle axes.

304. **Irthing:** a river of Cumberland.

307. **Acre's conquered wall.** Lord Dacre derived his name from the exploits of one of his ancestors at the siege of Acre, a city on the coast of Syria, in 1191.

319. **Levin-darting:** lightning-darting.

320. **frounced:** plaited or flounced.

321. **morsing-horns:** powder flasks.

322. **better:** right.

323. **in the escalade:** in scaling walls.

330. **glaive:** broadsword.

331. **battle's:** army's.

333. **To gain his spurs.** The young knight was fully equipped for his first warlike venture, except for his spurs. These were given him only after he had earned the right to wear them by showing his courage on the field.

344. **bartizan:** a small projecting turret.

345. **partisan:** a kind of long-handled battle-axe.

346. **Falcon, culver:** small cannon.

362. **better hand.** Cf. 322, note.

365. **a gauntlet on a spear.** "A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded."—*Scott's note.*

372. **the truce of Border tide:** a time when a truce had been declared by the English and the Scotch wardens.

374. **Gilsland brand:** either a sword made at Gilsland, a place in Cumberland near the Scotch Border, or soldiers from Gilsland armed with swords.

377. **reads:** advises. **swith:** quickly.

387. **pursuivant-at-arms**: a herald or a herald's attendant.

394. **lion argent**: a lion embroidered in white,—the crest of the Howards.

407. **flemens-firth**: an asylum for outlaws.

409. **march-treason pain**: punishment for *march-treason*, which included a number of offences peculiar to the Border.

410. **Saint Cuthbert's even**: the night before St. Cuthbert's day, which is March 20.

418. **warrison**: incorrectly used by Scott as signal for assault. Used by old writers in sense of reward.

426. **cheer**: countenance.

434. **emprise**: enterprise or undertaking,—used here ironically.

437. **Will cleanse him by oath.** Under some circumstances men accused of Border offences were allowed to clear themselves by swearing to their own innocence.

443. **Ancram ford.** "The battle of Ancram Moor, or Penielheuch, was fought A.D. 1545. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers, and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the Laird of Buccleuch and Norman Lesley."—*Scott's note.*

444-446. **And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight.** The lady here intimates that if Lord Dacre had not run away, he would have seen William of Deloraine knighted by the victorious Scottish leader.

453. **lyke-wake dirge**: properly a dirge or lament sung at the wake or watching of a corpse before burial, here used in sense of death signal.

474. **Ruberslaw**: a hill a few miles from Hawick.

475. **weapon-schaw**: review or assembling of troops, literally a weapon-show.

481. **the eagle and the rood**: Lord Maxwell's arms. **rood**: cross.

505. **Blanche Lion**: white lion. Cf. 394, note.

546. **Gainsaid**: said against or in opposition to.

551. **prescience:** knowledge of the future.

555. **lists:** the ground enclosed for a combat. For a detailed description of the lists arranged for a tournament or series of formal combats, see *Ivanhoe*, Chaps. VII-VIII.

570. **the jovial harper.** "The person here alluded to is one of our ancient Border minstrels, called Rattling Roaring Willie. This *sobriquet* was probably derived from his bullying disposition; being, it would seem, such a roaring boy as is frequently mentioned in old plays. While drinking at Newmill, upon Teviot, about five miles above Hawick, Willie chanced to quarrel with one of his own profession, who was usually distinguished by the odd name of Sweet Milk, from a place on Rule Water so called. They retired to a meadow on the opposite side of the Teviot, to decide the contest with their swords, and Sweet Milk was killed on the spot. A thorn-tree marks the scene of the murder, which is still called Sweet Milk Thorn. Willie was taken and executed at Jedburgh, bequeathing his name to the beautiful Scotch air, called 'Rattling Roaring Willie.'"—*Scott's note.*

574. **Black Lord Archibald's battle laws:** an ancient collection of regulations which by general consent governed warfare on the Border.

581. **The Bard of Reull.** See 570, note.

588. **Ousenam's maidens.** Ousenam, now Oxnam, was a town near Jedburgh.

> "The lasses of Ousenam water
> Are rugging and riving their hair
> And a' for the sake of Willie,
> His beauty was so fair."
> —*From the song of Rattling Roaring Willie.*

591. **Jedwood Air:** Jedwood Assizes, or meeting of the law courts.

614. **minion:** favorite.

CANTO FIFTH

29-30. **The chief whose antique crownlet:** the chief whose coronet, or the ancient renown of whose family, has been kept in remembrance in the songs of minstrels.

32. **thanedom:** the estate of a *thane*, or Saxon noble.

49. **Vails not to tell:** it is not worth while to name.

50. **Middle Marches.** The Border country was divided into the East, the Middle, and the West Marches, each division with its own warden.

51. **The Bloody Heart:** heraldic emblem of the Douglas.

54. **the Seven Spears of Wedderburne:** the seven sons of Sir David Home of Wedderburne.

58. **Clarence's Plantagenet.** "At the battle of Beaugé in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother to Henry V, was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton of Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet set with precious stones, which he wore around his helmet. The family of Swinton is one of the most ancient in Scotland, and produced many celebrated warriors."—*Scott's note.*

62-65. **the crest of Old Dunbar.** The Homes were descendants of the Dunbars, an ancient Scottish family, and bore the lion rampant as a heraldic emblem. They were usually closely allied with the Hepburns, hence "mingled banners."

71. **ta'en:** arranged.

73. **dear:** earnestly.

102. **dear:** friendly. Cf. 73, note.

110. **the football play.** "The football was anciently a very favorite sport all through Scotland, but especially upon the Borders. Sir John Carmichael of Carmichael, Warden of the Middle Marches, was killed in 1600 by a band of the Armstrongs, returning from a football match. Sir Robert Carey, in his Memoirs, mentions a great meeting, appointed by the Scotch riders to be held at Kelso for the purpose of playing at football, but which terminated in an incursion upon England. At present, the football is often played by the inhabitants of adjacent parishes, or of the opposite banks of a stream. The victory is contested with the utmost fury, and very serious accidents have sometimes taken place in the struggle."—*Scott's note.*

119. **whingers:** knives or daggers.

152. **pales:** stakes or timbers.

165. **By times:** early; generally written betimes.

190. **urchin:** mischievous elf, originally hedgehog.

193. **Hermitage:** a famous castle about thirty miles from Carlisle, the stronghold of the Douglases.

196. **For:** in spite of.

215. **tell:** understand.

230. **port:** "A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes."—*Scott's note.*

259. **buff:** originally leather prepared from the skin of a buffalo, later applied loosely to various kinds of heavy cloth.

260. **slashed:** cut so as to show the satin lining.

264. **Bilboa blade.** Bilboa, in Spain, was famous for the manufacture of swords.

271. **wimple:** a cloth worn out of doors by women, as a protection for the side of the head and the neck.

283. **barriers:** the lists or enclosure in which the combat was to take place.

291. **mortal field:** field on which one combatant would probably receive a mortal wound.

313. **coat:** coat-of-arms, hence honor.

334. **claymore:** a Highland broadsword.

344. **gorget:** a piece of armor protecting the throat. (From French *gorge* = throat.)

364. **ghostly:** spiritual.

371. **beaver:** lower and movable part of the helmet.

408. **the Spirit's prophecy.** Cf. Canto First, 177-179.

411. **Their influence kindly stars may shower.** An allusion to astrology, the science of the influence of the stars on human life, so generally believed in during the Middle Ages.

430. **dight:** clad.

459. **what hap had proved:** what chance had come to pass.

482. **long of thee:** on your account, or owing to you.

491. **gear:** stolen property.

494. **Cheer the dark bloodhound.** "The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with bloodhounds and bugle-horn, and was

called the *hot-trod*. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom, a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed."—*Scott's note.*

499. **bowning**: preparing to return. Cf. Canto Third, 392, note.

506. **sable**: black. **stole**: sometimes applied to a long scarf, sometimes to a robe worn by churchmen.

512. **Holme Coltrame's lofty nave**: the church at Holme Coltrame, a village on the Solway Firth.

523. **in choral stave**: with religious or church music.

527. **a poor and thankless soil**: the Scottish Border.

535. **Misprized**: slighted or disparaged.

CANTO SIXTH

17. **Caledonia**: name given by Roman writers to the northern part of Great Britain, and applied poetically to Scotland.

26. **Seems as**: it seems as if.

30-36. **By Yarrow's stream.** That the feelings here expressed were Scott's own was proved later when, after returning from a tour on the Continent in the vain hope of regaining his failing health, he again reached his native country. See Introduction.

34. **Teviot-stone**: a boulder that formerly marked a boundary on the height between the counties of Roxburgh and Dumfries.

51. **spousal rite**: betrothal ceremony.

54. **owches**: jewels.

56. **miniver**: a kind of costly fur, perhaps ermine.

70. **planetary hour.** An allusion to a common belief in the Middle Ages that at different times the influence of certain planets was especially strong.

78. **Guarded**: ornamented.

79. **merlin.** "A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was actually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron."—*Scott's note.*

89. **heron-shew:** young heron.

90. **princely peacock's gilded train.** "The peacock, it is well known, was considered, during the times of chivalry, not merely as an exquisite delicacy, but as a dish of peculiar solemnity. After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipped in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill. When it was introduced on days of grand festival, it was the signal for the adventurous knights to take upon them vows to do some deed of chivalry, 'before the peacock and the ladies.' "—*Scott's note.*

91. **the boar-head.** "The boar's head was also a usual dish of feudal splendor. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners, displaying the colors and achievements of the baron at whose board it was served." —*Scott's note.*

92. **cygnet:** swan. "There are often flights of swans upon St. Mary's Lake, at the head of the river Yarrow."—*Scott's note.* Cf. Wordsworth's "Yarrow Unvisited":

> "Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
> The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
> The swan on still Saint Mary's Lake
> Float double, swan and shadow."

93. **ptarmigan:** a kind of grouse.

98. **shalm:** an ancient musical instrument resembling a clarionet. **psaltery:** a kind of harp.

109. **sewers:** table servants.

128. **bit his glove:** "To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems not to have been considered, upon the Border, as a gesture of contempt, though so used by Shake-speare, but as a pledge of mortal revenge. It is yet remembered, that a young gentleman of Teviotdale, on the morning after a hard drinking-bout, observed that he had bitten his glove. He instantly demanded of his companion, with whom he had quarrelled? And, learning that he had had words with one of the party, insisted on instant satisfaction, asserting, that though he remembered nothing of the dispute, yet he was sure he never would have bit his glove unless he had received some unpardonable insult. He fell in the duel, which was fought near Selkirk, in 1721." *-Scott's note.*

132. **lyme-dog:** a dog held by a *leam*, or band; usually a hunting dog.

136. **Cologne blade:** a German sword such as Conrad would naturally wear.

142. **selle:** saddle, a French word.

147. **quit:** requite or repay.

154-155. **Since old Buccleuch.** Tradition says that one of the early Scotts earned the name and arms of Buccleuch, —literally, Buck's glen,—by fearlessly seizing a stag that had been brought to bay, and, after carrying him up a steep and rocky slope, laying the animal at the feet of the King.

162. **Solway strife.** A battle at Solway Moss in 1542, when a Scotch army was put to flight by a force of English Borderers which they mistook for the whole English army, actually several miles distant.

184. **the Land Debatable:** so called because claimed by both England and Scotland.

203. **lea:** properly, ploughed land, but loosely used of any kind of field.

207. **she had not tasted well:** she had hardly tasted.

215. **cross divine:** the cross worn by the Crusaders.

226. **haughty Henry's court:** the court of Henry VIII, king of England, 1509-1547.

229. **The gentle Surrey.** "The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honor to a more polished age. He was beheaded on Tower-hill in 1546; a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII, who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne.

"The song of the supposed bard is founded on an incident said to have happened to the Earl in his travels. Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, shewed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclining upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper."—*Scott's note.*

247. **deathless lay:** immortal song or poetry.

248. **Ungrateful Tudor's sentence.** Henry VIII's family name was Tudor.

251. **Naworth's iron towers.** Naworth Castle was the family seat of the Howards.

252. **Windsor's green glades and courtly bowers.** Surrey had attended the English court at Windsor Castle, and was afterwards a prisoner there.

253-256. **And, faithful to his patron's name.** At the death of his master, the minstrel attached himself to Lord William Howard.

263. **hight:** promised; properly, named.

271. **talisman:** a magical figure or charm.

272. **almagest:** an astronomical work by Claudius Ptolemy, who lived in the second century; later applied loosely to occult or abstruse works.

282. a **couch of Agra's silken loom:** a couch with a cover of silk woven at Agra, a city in India.

289. **eburnine:** made of ivory.

300. **The gory bridal bed.** An allusion to the unhappy matrimonial experiences of Henry VIII. He had six wives, two of whom were beheaded. **the plundered shrine.** An allusion to the closing of the monasteries and the confiscation of church property which took place in Henry's reign.

304-305. **These—those.** The Scots—the English. **faith:** the Catholic religion. A quarrel between Henry VIII and the Pope led to the establishing of an independent English church, and to the final overthrow of the Catholic church in England.

311. **Orcades:** the Orkney Islands off the northern coast of Scotland.

316. **Pentland:** Pentland Firth, off the northern coast of Scotland.

317. **Odin:** the chief god of the ancient Scandinavians.

325. **Lochlin:** Gaelic name for Scandinavia.

327. **raven's food:** those killed in battle.

328-329. **Kings of the main. Dragons of the wave:** The chiefs of the *Vikingr*, or Scandinavian pirates, assumed the title of *Sækonungr*, or Sea-kings. Ships, in the

inflated language of the Scalds, are often termed the serpents of the ocean."—*Scott's note.*

331. **Scald:** Scandinavian minstrel.

332. **Runic column:** a column inscribed with *runes*, the alphabetical characters of the ancient Scandinavians.

335. **Saga:** a Scandinavian tale or poem.

336. **Sea-Snake.** "The *jormungandr*, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the Edda. It was very nearly caught by the god Thor, who went to fish for it with a hook baited with a bull's head. In the battle betwixt the evil demons and the divinities of Odin, which is to precede the *Ragnarockr*, or Twilight of the Gods, this Snake is to act a conspicuous part."—*Scott's note.*

338. **dread Maids.** "These were the *Valkyriur*, or Selectors of the Slain, despatched by Odin from Valhalla, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They are well known to the English reader as Gray's Fatal Sisters."—*Scott's note.*

340-345. **Of chiefs.** As northern warriors were buried with their arms and treasures, their tombs were often robbed. It was believed that the ghosts of dead warriors often defended their property from such depredations.

341. **the pale death-lights of the tomb.** The ancient northern peoples believed that lights burned within the tombs of dead chieftains.

347. **Roslin's bowers:** Roslin Castle, built in 1446 by William St. Clair, Prince of Orkney. The Chapel, famous for its beauty, still stands.

358. **Castle Ravensheuch.** A strong castle on a steep crag over the Firth of Forth, long the chief residence of the Rosslyn family.

361. **inch:** Gaelic word for island.

372. **the ring they ride.** A favorite exercise of the knights of the Middle Ages was to try to take off on the point of the lance a ring suspended from a pole or a beam, while riding at full speed.

383. **caverned Hawthornden:** "Near Roslin, and famous as the residence of the poet Drummond. The house

stands on a cliff rising sheer from the waters of the Esk; and under it are several small caverns, hewn out of the solid rock, which have excited much speculation among antiquarians."—*Rolfe.*

385. **Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie.** The chiefs of the St. Clair family were buried in their armor, in the vaults beneath the chapel.

389. **sacristy:** a chamber in which were kept the sacred vessels and vestments used in religious services.

390. **foliage-bound:** carved with the figures of leaves.

429. **levin-brand:** thunderbolt.

454-455. **Like him of whom the story ran.** An allusion to the apparition of a dog which was said to haunt a certain castle in the Isle of Man. Scott tells a grewsome story of a soldier who, after much boastful and profane talk, sought the animal alone one night. After some time he returned to his comrades; but he was speechless, and, after lingering for three days, died in great agony.

468. **plight:** vow or pledge.

496. **sackcloth vest:** clothing of coarse cloth, worn as a sign of penitence.

499. **uneath:** scarcely, an old Saxon word.

515. **scapular:** a scarf worn over the shoulders by monks.

519. **host:** consecrated bread.

523. **mitred:** wearing a mitre or bishop's cap.

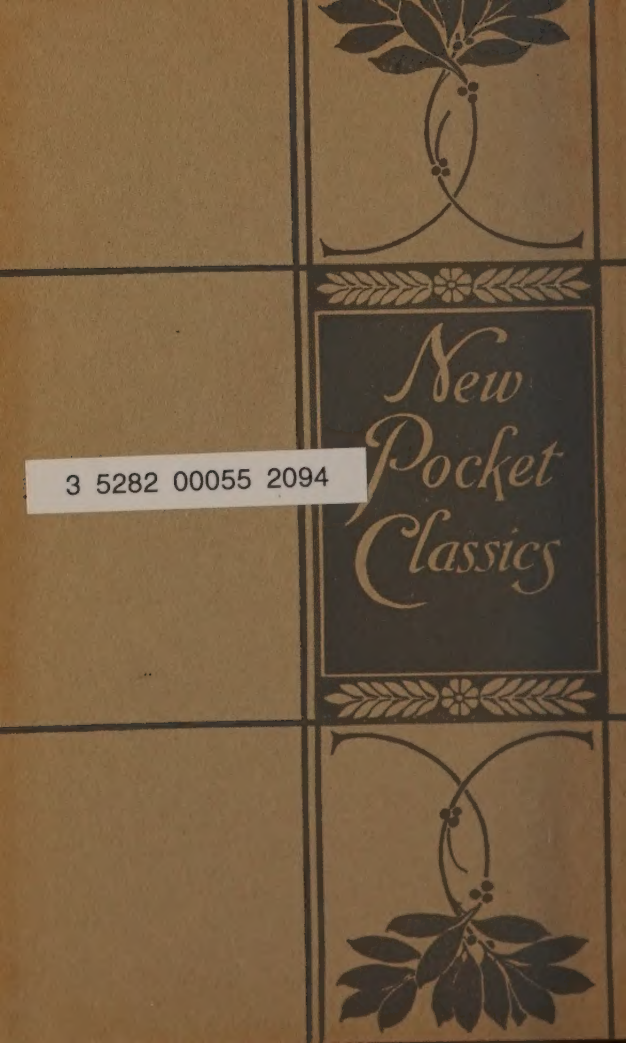
532. **office close:** close of the office or special service for the dead.

535. **burden:** a repeated phrase or refrain in a song.

536-537. **Dies irae, dies illa,** etc. "Day of wrath, that day shall dissolve the world in ashes." The opening lines of a famous Latin hymn ascribed to Thomas of Celano, a Franciscan friar of the tenth century. Scott was very fond of the hymn and hummed parts of it during his last illness.

568. **sweet Bowhill:** the residence of Lord Dalkeith, to whom Scott dedicated the "Lay of the Last Minstrel." It was Lady Dalkeith who suggested to Scott the subject of the poem. See Introduction.

571. **Harehead-shaw:** a wood not far from Bowhill.
572. **Carterhaugh:** a plain near Newark.
573. **Blackandro's oak.** Blackandro was a hill near Abbotsford.



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